Miracles in the New Testament

J. M. Thompson

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MIRACLES
IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT

BY THE

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OXFORD

THIRD IMPRESSION

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PREFACE

The Argument

The main part of this book consists of a critical examination of the miracle-stories of the New Testament, leading to the hypothesis that the original events underlying those traditions need not be regarded as miraculous. This is prefaced by an attempt to define the belief in miracles, and followed by an estimate of some of the theological results of its rejection.

It must not be thought that, because the constructive part of the book (pp. 211-218) is so short, it is unimportant. It was inevitable, from the nature of the case, that the detailed criticism of the miracle-stories should form the bulk of the argument. But criticism is throughout regarded as subordinate to construction. There would be little point in discussing the problem of miracles except as a step towards a formulation of Christian theology. The last few pages of the conclusion are meant to focus the whole argument upon what really matters—our belief about God and Christ. They should, perhaps, be read first, as well as last, if the book is to be fairly judged as a whole.

Miracles and Evidence

Since very little space will be available for the discussion of preliminaries, it may be well to state here the general attitude which will be taken up towards the evidence for miracles.

It will be assumed that miracles are possible, and, therefore, that sufficient evidence might be found to prove them. But since, *ex hypothesi*, they are exceptions to the ordinary non-miraculous sequence of things, considerably more evidence will be required for miracles than for other events. If, for instance, a miracle is embedded in the account of a journey or a discourse, we shall not feel bound to accept it on the same amount of evidence. The alternative of 'all or none' will not necessarily apply. At the same time, no attempt has been made to fix *a priori* the amount of evidence which would be sufficient to establish a miracle. Each case has been dealt with on its own merits. The evidence itself is of two kinds—first, direct evidence *pro* or *con* the occurrence of individual miracles; and, secondly, indirect evidence, which may consist either of certain *a priori* considerations tending to fix our standard of verification, or of arguments drawn from experience and historical analogy which are admissible as additional evidence to matters of fact. It is, of course, with the direct evidence that we are here primarily concerned.

Works of Healing

It will be impossible to deal with all the questions

which might be raised about the stories of healing in the Gospels. Our general hypothesis will be found to be that these incidents happened, for the most part, pretty much in the forms in which they are related; but that there is sufficient evidence, drawn partly from the stories themselves, and partly from the growing body of medical and psychological experience, to suggest that they were not originally miraculous. It is not, however, unreasonable to demand some more detailed proof that the diseases were of a kind which is amenable to faith-healing, and that the method of cure which Jesus adopted was of this nature.[1] Some evidence pointing in this direction will be found on p. 34 *et sqq.* But, as a matter of fact, the Gospels can hardly be trusted to give the required assurances. The absence of any power of diagnosing disease, the superstition which attributed physical ills to possession by evil spirits, and the tendency at once to exaggerate the successes and to ignore the failures of the healing ministry of Christ, warn us against too literal an insistence upon the accounts as we have them. We cannot safely argue that, because a particular case, as reported, seems to belong to a class of disease not generally regarded as neurotic, or as amenable to faith-healing, the cure of it must have been miraculous.

Science and Religion

Finally, although the word 'science' is hardly men-

[1] Ryle, in the *Hibbert Journal*, April 1907.

tioned here, the whole argument is an attempt to hold together two experiences—the religious and the scientific —in the thorough-going sense in which they are generally held apart. That is why 'miracle' is defined in terms which may seem to be somewhat precise, but which are necessary to express the opposition that still exists in popular thought between the religious and scientific views of the world. And that is why the line of solution which is here suggested rests upon the principle of the *complete mediation of the divine by the human and natural*, as epitomised in the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

April 1911.

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MIRACLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY—THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

(i)

A MIRACLE may be defined as 'A marvellous event occurring within human experience, which cannot have been brought about by human power, or by the operation of any natural agency, and must therefore be ascribed to the special intervention of the Deity, or of some supernatural being chiefly, an act (*e.g.* of healing) exhibiting control over the laws of nature, and serving as evidence that the agent is either divine or is specially favoured by God.'[1]

There are three parts in this definition; and a short discussion of them will serve to outline the scope and object of the present inquiry.

1. Etymologically, a miracle (Latin *miraculum*) is an object of wonder, a marvellous event—something about which men say 'How surprising!' But it does not follow that an event which causes wonder *ought* to do so. And the etymology states nothing as to the reasons for which the event is marvellous, or as to the inferences which might be drawn from its being so. That is why the definition cannot end here.

The phrase, 'occurring within human experience,' is of course intended to fix the meaning of the word 'event.' There may be events occurring outside human experience;

[1] *Murray's English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, vol. vi. p. 486.

but they cannot move us to wonder, or to any other emotion. It is only when they fall within human experience that we can raise the question whether they are miracles or no.

2. The etymological account, then, is insufficient. We want to know the essential meaning which common use has given to the word miracle. Hence the second part of the definition. A miracle is an event which, although it occurs within human experience, yet 'cannot have been brought about by human power, or by the operation of any natural agency.'

Now 'nature' may mean either (i) Reality as it actually is, or (ii) Reality as it is at present adumbrated for us by 'natural science,' and formulated in the 'laws of nature.' It is only in the latter sense that nature can admit either exceptions to its laws, or agencies which are not its own. And it is only in respect of such exceptional events that the question is generally raised—are they due to the special intrusion of a supernatural agency? *i.e.* are they miracles?

The idea of miracles, then, presupposes and rests upon the perception of a contrast between the normal events of experience, which seem to keep the laws discovered by natural science, and the abnormal events, which seem to break them.

Further, if the marvellousness of the event depends on the existence of this contrast, the degree of marvellousness will vary directly as the amount of the contrast. The importance of this point is obvious. Among people who live at a very low stage of civilisation, the idea that events are ordinarily brought about by human or natural agency is practically non-existent. Nothing is ordinary: they have no conception of 'law.' Consequently the contrast between one class of events and another does not strike them. It makes no difference, at this stage, whether we say, 'Everything is a miracle,' or 'There are no miracles.' The problem of miracles does not exist. A very similar

situation is reached at the other extreme of civilisation, when a certain type of mind—called by a recent French writer 'gelatino-mystic' [1]—regards every event (not in its origin or purpose, merely, but in the actual form in which it falls within experience) as partly or wholly supernatural. From this point of view, too, there exists no contrast between one class of events and another, and, so far as this is the case, the assertion that 'Every event is a miracle' is equivalent to the denial, 'Miracles do not happen.' [2]

In fact, the problem of miracles is of small importance, so long as no distinction is drawn between the normal event, which observes the laws of nature, and the extraordinary event, which breaks them. It grows more and more urgent, as the former class of events becomes known, and systematised, and counted upon as the normal constitution of things. It rises into an acute crisis at a stage of civilisation such as that of the present day, when the growing consciousness

[1] Houtin, *The Crisis among the French Clergy*, p. 13.

[2] 'I can see nothing astonishing,' writes Richard Jefferies, 'in what are called miracles. Only those who are mesmerised by matter can find a difficulty in such events. I am aware that the evidence for miracles is logically and historically untrustworthy; I am not defending recorded miracles. My point is that in principle I see no reason at all why they should not take place this day. I do not even say that there are, or ever have been, miracles, but I maintain that they would be perfectly natural. The wonder rather is that they do not happen frequently. . . . When I consider that I dwell this moment in the eternal Now, that has ever been and will be, that I am in the midst of immortal things this moment, that there probably are souls as infinitely superior to mine as mine to a piece of timber, what then, pray, is a "miracle"? As commonly understood, a "miracle" is a mere nothing. I can conceive soul-works done by simple will or thought a thousand times greater' (*The Story of My Heart*, chapter iii.). 'Miracle' here means any conspicuous instance of the effect of spirit upon matter. No question is raised as to the nature of the form in which the effect is produced. But it is only when this is claimed to be supernatural too that the problem of miracles arises. Cp. Eucken, *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 36. 'With good reason did our greatest poet call miracle the dearest child of faith. A religion entirely devoid of it is a self-contradiction. *The only question is what we are to understand by it.*' The answer is, we are to understand this element in our faith as *unlimited supernaturalism, without miracles.*

of the uniformity of nature (as this observed constitution of things is called) seems to clash with traditions which are closely bound up with the moral and spiritual ideals of the age. It can only cease to trouble us when the certainty is reached that *all* events, so far as they occur within human experience, can be explained in terms of human or natural agency. Then, once again, it will be indifferent whether none are called miracles, or all.

3. But the belief in miracles is more than the recognition of a contrast between normal and abnormal events. It means also that the latter are interpreted in a particular way. The scientist explains them as instances of natural laws which cannot be formulated yet, but which will be formulated some day. But the believer in miracles explains them as due to the special intervention of a supernatural agency, which can never be formulated scientifically.

This point, too, is clearly stated in our definition, when it says that the exceptional event is something which 'must be ascribed to the special intervention of the Deity, or of some supernatural being; chiefly an act (*e.g.* of healing) exhibiting control over the laws of nature, and serving as evidence that the agent is either divine or is specially favoured by God.'

4. But we have to notice one more point. The above definition gives only *one* interpretation of miracles, though it is the prevalent one. For, granted the intrusion of a supernatural agency, this might yet be evil as easily as good—if a subordinate agency, devils, not angels; if a supreme agency, Satan, not God. Such views have, in fact, been widely held. The history of belief clearly shows that there is no necessary connection between miracles and morality. It is, then, a special hypothesis of religious faith, not a general postulate of experience, that miracles are signs of a *divine* agency. And it is open to question whether religion has any right to put such an interpretation upon the facts.

Three problems thus emerge—(i) first, whether any events have, as a matter of fact, occurred within human experience, which cannot be explained in terms of the laws of nature as at present conceived; (ii) secondly, whether such events, if they have occurred, are to be regarded as instances of natural laws hitherto unknown, or whether we are to say that they 'cannot have been brought about by human power, or by the operation of any natural agency'; and (iii) thirdly, whether, in the latter case, it is right to ascribe such events 'to the special intervention of the Deity, or of some supernatural being.'

Now it is clear that the second and third of these questions are subordinate to the first. There is no use in debating the significance of events that may never have happened. Our first business is with the question of fact. Our first inquiry must be purely evidential. Every other consideration may stand aside, until we have investigated the question, *Did the alleged events happen, or did they not? This, and this only, is the question dealt with in the inquiry which follows.*

(ii)

It is, however, necessary to justify the purely evidential approach to the problem of miracles from another point of view. We have to consider the possibility that the *a posteriori* method may be overruled by certain *a priori* principles.

There was a time when either the impossibility of miracles as such, or the impossibility of finding sufficient evidence to prove them, would have been held to rule out our whole inquiry. But nowadays the scientific view is more cautiously expressed. The more confidently we rely upon the uniformity of nature, the more willing we are to allow that, after all, it is a postulate of scientific method, not a necessity of thought.[1] In practice, it is true, to admit a miracle is to

[1] Cp. Rashdall in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1906.

commit intellectual suicide. But theoretically, science does not deny the *possibility* of miracles, because it does not deny the possibility of anything. Further, the possibility that a miracle may happen involves (at least in theory) the possibility of finding sufficient evidence to prove it.[1] Accordingly we need not turn aside into the paths of this ancient controversy.

But here another by-way opens up. It is suggested that miracles must have happened, because there are excellent reasons why they should have done so.

Now, if this principle is urged in its full sense, it stultifies any investigation of evidence whatsoever. But what is commonly meant by it is this—that under certain circumstances the *a priori* probability of miracles becomes itself an additional piece of particular evidence for this or that miracle. In this more modest form the claim is so commonly made, and leads to so many misunderstandings, that it must be carefully examined before we proceed further.

It may be frankly allowed that no historical inquiry can proceed upon purely *a posteriori* evidence. There is no method of estimating evidence, or of drawing conclusions, which does not involve *a priori* principles. Facts are meaningless until interpreted by and into theories. It is only by being prejudged that they become evidence at all. But it is of primary importance that the theories should be of the right kind. In a criminal trial the jury are not instructed to clear their minds of *all* presuppositions, but only of those which are not germane to the case. In a historical inquiry the investigator cannot proceed without guiding principles: but they must be strictly appropriate to his subject. If he starts without presuppositions as to the relative value of documents, or the trustworthiness of witnesses, if he has no standard of probability based on the general character of the people or period with which

[1] Strictly speaking, what might be proved is not the miracle itself, which is *ex hypothesi* inaccessible to scientific method, but *the gap in the non-miraculous sequence of events*, from which we infer the presence of a miracle.

he deals, his results will be worthless. If, on the other hand, he allows his judgement of historical truth to be affected by his political or religious beliefs, if his treatment of the facts is biassed by a desire to prove a particular theory, to edify, or to amuse—then the result may be equally disastrous.

The problem of miracles is particularly open to such dangers. As an evidential question, it has its own necessary presuppositions. But they must be of a historical nature. They must concern the nature of documents or witnesses, or of the general rules which govern the formation and transmission of evidence. If they are to include any external or non-historical considerations, it can only be by the reaction of these upon the form in which the evidence is given, or the temper in which it is received. For the feeling that an alleged event is appropriate may incline us to accept it on slight evidence, but is not in itself evidence for it. And further, the same feeling may have made the witness to the event uncritical, and therefore untrustworthy.

Thus no general argument as to the probability of miracles can be admitted as direct evidence for this or that miracle. No theological presupposition—as, for instance, that miracles are or are not a corollary of the Incarnation—has any place as such in the historical inquiry whether miracles have or have not occurred. There are only two ways in which such presuppositions can legitimately affect the question of evidence—namely, if they dispose us to demand more (or less) evidence for the alleged event than we should otherwise do; or if they were present in the minds of the witnesses to the miracle, and influenced the form of their evidence. Otherwise they are *nil ad rem.*

The establishment of this principle shows that we must ignore the second by-way, as we ignored the first. Our analysis of the meaning of the word 'miracle' showed us that the primary question at stake is whether such events, as miracles are alleged to be, ever happened. We can

now add that no *a priori* principle, either as to the possibility or as to the probability of miracles, need divert us from the straight path of the evidential inquiry.

(iii)

The question of evidence takes us back to the Bible. And here it is important to notice exactly what we are setting out to discover. We do not merely want to know whether the Biblical writers thought that miracles occurred, but also whether they were right in so thinking. It will not be enough to get back to the earliest tradition: we must try to reconstruct the facts that lie behind it. It is sometimes said that this ought not to be attempted, and that it cannot be done. But the very traditions, which the latter objection asks us to regard as ultimate, challenge further inquiry. When, as in the case of the story of the Empty Tomb, we are able to trace the development of a comparatively simple and natural story into one that is miraculous and elaborately evidential, we cannot be sure that the earliest extant tradition is really the starting-point of the whole process: we must raise the question whether it may not itself be a development of something simpler still: that is, we are driven back on to an attempt to reconstruct the facts. Indeed, this must always be so, if the question of *truth* is to be raised; for a story that is treated as evidence has no importance except in its relation to facts.

The documents of the New Testament,[1] which thus become the subject-matter of our inquiry, are of secondary importance for Christian experience, but of primary importance for Christian evidence. The Christian faith existed before the Christian documents were written. The Gospels were a reminiscence or rediscovery by faith of the facts on which the Church believed itself to be based.

[1] The limitation of our inquiry to the New Testament is suggested both by religious interest and by considerations of evidence.

For the reality and value of the experience which is the essence of Christianity, faith is its own proof, and the documents are subsidiary. For the explanation and justification of this experience the documents have unique value.

Documents like these are not dead things. For, first, the faith that made them has always been able to bring them to life again; and secondly, modern criticism has worked back through the written records to the men who wrote them, and is reinterpreting Christian documents from a better knowledge of early Christian life and thought.

Consequently we must endeavour to trace the influence of the various witnesses' points of view upon the form of their evidence. Our task will be to follow out, through its consecutive stages, a single body of growing tradition, to detach from the variations of the witnesses the original form of their narratives, and to disengage the personality of the Master from the idiosyncrasies of His disciples.

(iv)

For our present subject—the problem of miracles—the documentary evidence falls into the following groups :—

1. First, we possess a few letters dated from twenty-one to twenty-seven years after the death of Jesus, and addressed by the leading Christian missionary of the time to congregations that he had founded in Corinth and Galatia, and to fellow-Christians in Rome.

I. Corinthians, 55 A.D.
II. Corinthians, 55 A.D.
Romans, 55-56 A.D.
Galatians, 50-55 A.D.[1]

Others of St. Paul's Epistles are probably or possibly genuine; but it will be safest to confine ourselves to undisputed evidence.

[1] Turner, 'Chronology of New Testament' in *Hastings' D.B.* i. 423.

2. Secondly, we have, either in its original form, or in something not easily distinguishable from it, a life of Christ which formed the basis of two other of the four canonical Gospels, and which was probably written down within thirty-five or forty years of the Crucifixion. This is the Gospel according to St. Mark (Mk.). Upon analysis, this Gospel shows evidence of having been compiled from earlier sources, of which the most important was probably a Petrine or Apostolic tradition (P) of the ministry and death of Christ.

3. Thirdly, we know of, and can with some certainty reconstruct, another early, and perhaps earlier, document (known as Q), which was not a life of Christ, but a few incidents and a collection of sayings.

4. Fourthly, we possess in the Gospel according to St. Matthew (Mt.), a Jewish compilation of uncertain date (though falling between the year 70 and the end of the first century), which combines Mk. and Q with a considerable amount of new matter.

5. Fifthly, we have a more elaborate and literary work—probably written between the years 70 and 75—a history of the origin and growth of Christianity, by a Greek disciple of St. Paul, in two volumes. The first volume, the Gospel according to St. Luke (Lk.), attempts to give a fuller and more scientific life of Christ than had hitherto been available, and is, like Mt., a compilation of Mk. and Q with much new material. The second volume (the Acts of the Apostles), the sources of which included at least one document (the 'we-sections,' WS.), dating from 50 to 61, carries on the life of Christ into the life of the Church, and traces the expansion of Christianity from its narrow Judaic limits through the chief cities of Asia Minor and Greece, to its climax in Rome.

6. Sixthly, we possess a mystical and devotional treatise on the Incarnation thrown into biographical form—the Gospel according to St. John (Jn.)—which dates from the end of the first or the early part of the second century.

7. This is all the canonical material which we shall need to use: there are, besides, a few apocryphal documents, such as the Gospel of Peter, or the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which may furnish evidence on separate points of the inquiry.

Taking these sources as a whole, we may say that they fall into two classes :—

1. *Original* (*sources*).

P. A Petrine or Apostolic tradition of the ministry and death of Christ underlying Mk., and through Mk. forming the basis of Mt. and Lk.

Q. A collection of sayings, with a few incidents, very sparingly used by Mk., and much more fully incorporated by Mt. and Lk.

WS. A diary written by a companion of St. Paul.

St. Paul. A group of letters, embodying an independent version of some parts of the apostolic tradition.

All these sources were probably extant in a written form between the years 50 and 61, *i.e.* within twenty-one to thirty-two years after the death of Christ.

No doubt, too, there are some primitive elements underlying the fourth Gospel, and the traditions peculiar to Mt. and Lk.

2. *Editorial.*

Mk. A compilation of P with selections from Q, and considerable editorial additions and modifications, for the use of the Christian community in Rome.

Mt. A new edition of Mk., with a fresh and fuller use of Q, for the use of Jewish Christians.

Lk. A gospel for the use of Gentile Christians, compiled independently of Mt., but on the same lines.

Acts. A sequel to Lk., carrying on the history of Christianity to the arrival of St. Paul in Rome.

Jn. A reinterpretation of the Gospel tradition in the light of Græco-Jewish philosophy.

The second class of sources may be dated between 65 and 100 A.D.

Mk., 65-70;
Lk., 70-75;
Acts, 75-80;
Mt., 70-100;
Jn., 100 (or later);

i.e. most of them fall within thirty-six or fifty years after the Crucifixion; but Jn. must, and Mt. may fall considerably later.

As regards the treatment of this evidence, it is clear that the question of miracles might be approached from either of two sides. The evidence for miraculous powers in Christ Himself might give ground for estimating similar claims in the early Church; or the experience of such powers in the society that wrote the Gospels might be held to condition their attribution to Christ Himself. There are advantages in either method of treatment. On the whole, however, it seems best to follow the historical order of our sources—to examine first the evidence of St. Paul, St. Mark, and Q, then that of the other Gospels, and lastly that of the Acts. Two problems—those of the Virgin Birth and of the Resurrection—demand separate treatment, and will be reserved until the end.[1]

[1] Throughout the book the four Gospels will be referred to as Mt., Mk., Lk., and Jn., and their authors as St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.

CHAPTER II

THE EVIDENCE OF ST. PAUL

It is a commonplace of criticism that the earliest Christian documents are not the Gospels, but a group of letters by St. Paul. The Epistles to the Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians, written within twenty-one to twenty-seven years of the Crucifixion, and the authentic work of a Christian of marked ability and liberal education, ought to throw a valuable light upon the question of miracles.

We might reasonably expect to find in them not only references to the miracles attributed by the Church to its Founder, but also first-hand evidence as to powers still existent in the Christian congregations, and (this would be most valuable of all) information as to supernatural gifts possessed by the apostle himself.

(i)

The first of these expectations is very soon disappointed. It is, indeed, a matter of considerable difficulty for a modern Christian to accustom himself to St. Paul's attitude towards the Gospel. Brought up to believe that every fact in the historical life of Jesus has a divine significance, and contributes to the proper understanding of the Incarnation, he cannot understand St. Paul's indifference to the knowledge of Christ 'after the flesh.' Yet so it is. In St. Paul's mind Jesus has become entirely absorbed in Christ, and fleshly knowledge in spiritual. The value of the Incarnation depends, for him, upon its transcendence of elements

which seem to us to be essential constituents of it. The divinity of Christ is demonstrated by a historical fact—the Resurrection; but it does not *consist in* historical facts. The only point at which St. Paul refers in any detail to the historical ministry is in his description of the institution of the Eucharist (1 Cor. x., xi.): 'to the acts, including the miracles, of the earlier and ministerial life of Jesus, there are no Pauline references at all, either in letters or speeches.'[1]

This detachment from the historical basis of his religion is partly explained by the circumstances of St. Paul's conversion, which he regarded as giving him in a moment of time the same knowledge of the divine and glorified Christ as the older apostles had won as the result of their earthly companionship with Jesus. His way of approach had been parallel to theirs: its results were equally valid: there was no call for him to recapitulate an alien experience.

But it would be a mistake to think that St. Paul stood quite alone in this point of view. The way in which he introduces his account of the Last Supper and of the Resurrection appearances shows that he is handing on (παραδοῦναι) a tradition which he has received (παραλαμβάνειν): and in the former case, at any rate, he believes that it rests upon Jesus' own authority (1 Cor. xi. 23, xv. 3). If he shares a common tradition, he also shares a common indifference to what falls outside that tradition. The Gospel of the early Christians is the Gospel of the Passion and the Resurrection. To this type not only Mk. conforms, but also the speeches of St. Peter in Acts. The reason of this is that the facts of the ministry of Jesus (excluding those of the last week) were not as yet taken up into theology, and therefore tended to drop out of sight—for theology, in one sense the corrupter of historical truth, is in another the chief means of its preservation. Nobody cared to record the facts for their own sake until a time when the possibility of doing so accurately had gone by.

[1] Hawkins, in *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, p. 91.

Had the attempt been made earlier, it would have met with much greater success. Had St. Paul cared to do so, he could have collected material at least as valuable as that embodied in Mk. or Q. It was not as an introduction to theology, but as an afterthought to it, that the Gospels were written. They were meant—in part at least—to remind men of facts which were in danger of being forgotten.

St. Paul's silence, then, as to the facts of Jesus' ministry, and, in particular, the absence of any reference to His works of healing, is not evidence against those facts. It only suggests that, at a time when so little interest was shown in the historical content of the Incarnation, the truth about it was likely to be forgotten. We can say more than this. The intervention of one or more generations between the occurrences themselves and the time at which they were recorded need not, perhaps, have involved any loss of the true tradition, if it had been a time of general stagnation. But it was not. The first generation after Christ was a time of stirring religious life and striking theological development. And, even if theological interpretation was at first concentrated upon a comparatively small part of the historical material, the result was that the Church came ultimately to the consideration of the other parts with its mind already made up.

Thus it is that (1) St. Paul has little or nothing to say about the facts of the Gospel, and (2) that in the Gospels themselves so much of the material is (evidentially) of secondary value, and (3) already shows theological colouring.

(ii)

As regards the existence of supernatural powers in the Christian congregations, one thing at any rate is certain—St. Paul is entirely agreed with Acts as to the dependence of Church life upon the various gifts of the Holy Spirit. This spirit is conceived primarily as a special manifesta-

tion in certain individuals, not as the normal content of certain rites or offices. It magnifies the person rather than the institution. The idea of its limitation by ministry and sacraments was of later growth. Thus, even in 1 Cor. xii., a passage which comes nearest to correlating the gifts of the Spirit with ecclesiastical distinctions, there are some of the former which escape such classification. And in such a passage as Gal. v. the ecclesiastical limitations are entirely transcended.

It will be worth while to illustrate the parallelism in the first of these passages.

1. Cor. xii.

vs. 8-10 (gifts)	vs. 28 (offices)
1. the word of wisdom	1. apostles (?)
2. the word of knowledge	3. teachers (?)
3. faith	
4. gifts of healings	5. gifts of healings
5. workings of miracles	4. miracles
6. prophecy	2. prophets
7. discernings of spirits	
8. divers kinds of tongues	8. divers kinds of tongues
9. the interpretation of tongues	[9. 'do all interpret?' vs. 30]
	6. helps
	7. governments

One or two remarks may be made on this list. The parallelism of offices to gifts is, as we have said, incomplete. 'Faith' cannot be limited to any one office. 'Discerning of spirits' and 'the interpretation of tongues' are corollaries of 'prophecy' and 'divers kinds of tongues.' Two administrative offices are (naturally enough) added. There are no official names for healers, miracle-workers, and speakers of tongues. For our present purpose the important point is that St. Paul regards not only 'gifts of healing' (*χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων*) but also 'workings of miracles' (*ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων*) as part of the ordinary work of the Spirit in the Church. At the same time he puts these gifts and functions in subordination to the higher class of pastoral and evangelistic work.

They are part of the accompaniment and credentials of the preaching of the Gospel. But they are not essential to it.

The phrase *χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων* claims no more than is covered, as we shall have occasion to show, by the phenomena of faith-healing. It is unnecessary to labour this point here. But *ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων* is often interpreted as though it meant more than this. It is therefore worth while to examine the use of *δυνάμεις* (translated as 'powers,' 'mighty works,' or 'miracles') in the New Testament.

(1) Mk. vi. 2—here the word refers to works of healing previously described, and is explicitly identified with the healing of sick folk in vi. 5.

vi. 14 refers to the 'powers working in' Jesus in the foregoing works of healing (cf. v. 30, also of faith-healing).

ix. 39 refers to a case of exorcism.

(The only other use of the word in this Gospel is in connection with the Parousia, which is not here in question.)

(2) Mt. vii. 22, 'mighty works' are classed with prophecy and exorcism: it is not said what they are.

xi. 20, 21, 23, the word is used vaguely of works done at Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

(The only other passages are Mt.'s parallels to those of Mk. dealing with the Parousia.)

(3) Lk. xix. 37 is the only passage (excepting one parallel, Lk. x. 13 = Mt. xi. 21) in which Lk. uses this word of Jesus' works; it refers to them generally, without specification.

(Lk. also has parallels to the Parousia-language in Mk. and Mt. But ordinarily he uses *δύναμις* of the power which is the source of Jesus' works (iv. 14, 36, v. 17, vi. 19, viii. 46), or which He gives to His disciples (ix. 1, xxiv. 19). Once it is used of John the Baptist (i. 17), and once of Satan (x. 19).

(4) Acts ii. 22, 'mighty works, wonders, and signs' accompanying Jesus' ministry: used without specification.

viii. 13, used of the works done by Philip in Samaria.

The only works described (viii. 7) are exorcism and works of healing.

xix. 11, when some of the Ephesians are healed indirectly by the contact of St. Paul's clothes ('handkerchiefs or aprons'—a fairly common form of faith-healing), St. Luke describes these as 'special miracles' (*δυνάμεις οὐ τὰς τυχούσας*). The inference is that *δυνάμεις* by itself meant normal cases of direct faith-healing. (Elsewhere Acts uses *δύναμις* as Lk. does. There are no other similar uses of the word in the New Testament.)

This evidence is conclusive. In the only cases in which the reference of the word *δυνάμεις* is explicitly stated, it means the healing of disease, or the exorcism of evil spirits. This holds true, not only in the Gospels, but also in the Acts (xix. 11 is particularly significant). It is therefore natural to suppose that St. Paul uses the word in the same sense, and that when he distinguishes *δυνάμεων* from *ἰαμάτων* he only means different degrees of the same kind of phenomena. That is, unless faith cures are miracles,[1] St. Paul never claims miraculous powers for the Church.

(iii)

Finally, there is the evidence as to St. Paul's own experiences.

(1) In 1 Cor. i. 22 St. Paul is describing his method of preaching the Gospel—'seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.' In other words, St. Paul, like Jesus Himself, refuses to give a sign to the Jews. The only power (*δύναμις*) which he claims is the preaching of the person and death of Christ. Indeed, so far as the evidence of Acts goes, he did not work any cures, still less any wonders, at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 3-5,

[1] *v.* Preface, cp. p. 39 f.

2 Cor. vi. 7, xii. 9, for similar expressions with regard to 'power').

(2) The account given in 2 Cor. xii. 12 is rather different, 'Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works.' But in any case it claims nothing more than is covered by works of healing and exorcism. 'Signs' (*σημεῖα*), 'wonders' (*τέρατα*), and 'mighty works' (*δυνάμεις*) are not different things, but the same thing differently described. Although all three words are used together only in this passage and in Acts ii. 22 (*v.* p. 17), *σημεῖα* and *τέρατα* are joined seven times in Acts, and *σημεῖα* and *δυνάμεις* once.

σημεῖα. Acts ii. 19. Quotation from Joel ii. 30.
iv. 16, 22 = healing of a cripple by St. Peter.
viii. 6 = Philip's works of healing and exorcism.

σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα, ii. 43, iv. 30, v. 12, vi. 8, xiv. 3, xv. 12. Most of these are 'commonplace' summaries of miracles: in no case is any instance given. vii. 36 refers to Moses's miracles in Exodus.

σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις (viii. 13) refers again to Philip's works in Samaria. It is clear, then, that the meaning already given to *δυνάμεις* covers St. Paul's use of the word in the present passage.

(3) Rom. xv. 18-19, 'those [things] which Christ wrought through me . . . by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Ghost.'

Here St. Paul is summarising his whole ministry, not referring to any special parts of it. He is conscious that the power of the Holy Ghost works through him. But the description of its effects is given in the conventional phrase 'signs and wonders,' which is to be interpreted as before; and these phenomena are subordinate to the preaching of the Gospel ('so that . . . I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ').

We conclude that St. Paul believed himself to possess special powers of the Holy Spirit, but that the language in which he himself describes these powers does not cover anything more than faith-healing and exorcism, which are instances of natural law, not miracles. This, we shall find, is in complete agreement with the evidence of Acts, in which there is a marked difference between the miraculous elements in chapters i.-xii. ('Acts of Peter') and chapters xiii.-xxviii. ('Acts of Paul').[1]

The evidence of St. Paul, then, enables us to suggest, at the opening of our inquiry, this important hypothesis, that *the nearer we get to first-hand witness, the weaker becomes the evidence for miracles.*

[1] *v.* chapter viii.

CHAPTER III

THE EVIDENCE OF ST. MARK

(i)

Modern criticism has given us the right to assume that in dealing with Mk. we are dealing with the earliest of the extant Gospels. In saying this we do not forget that Mk. is a compilation from sources earlier than itself, and that at least one of these (Q) may represent a type of Gospel earlier than Mk. The question will have to be raised, how far these sources can be satisfactorily reconstructed.[1]

The early date of Mk. is by itself no sufficient guarantee of trustworthiness. Nor are those various qualities in which it seems to show its superiority to Mt. or Lk., as a historical document, entirely convincing; for it is its own standard in these matters: we have no better or more primitive Gospel of the same type with which to compare it. There is, however, one point which, if it can be established, is of great importance; but it is a point that cannot be stated in black and white, and rests on an appeal to critical intuition: it is the strong impression of unity and reality that the Gospel, when read as a whole, manages to convey. It is frequently said that the Gospels give us no psychology of Jesus—no account of the development of His self-consciousness. Explicitly, they certainly do not. But it may fairly be urged that Mk. implies a steady growth in the knowledge of Jesus about Himself, and in His attitude to His disciples and

[1] For the sources of Mk. *v.* p. 24; for the reconstruction of Q, p. 32.

to the world, which is neither accidental nor artificial. If it is not the aim of the Gospel to produce this impression (as may be allowed), and if (as may be claimed) its chronology is sometimes haphazard, and its selection of incidents arbitrary, it is the more remarkable that the result upon the reader should be what it is.

This general impression affords a background against which we may conveniently group those features of the Gospel to which criticism calls attention.

It may be well to state the critical position in the form of an answer to an objection that is very frequently urged against it. It is said, and said quite truly, that the Church came into existence before the Gospels. From this it is inferred that the Evangelists, when they came to describe the facts of the life of Christ, took for granted the rudiments of Catholic Christology, so that (for instance) if St. Matthew described Jesus as 'the carpenter's Son' it was because he already knew and believed in the Virgin Birth; or if St. Mark represented Him as thoroughly and entirely human, it was because he already assumed Him to be divine. Consequently, it is urged, the critic can only arrive at a true picture of Christ if he is careful to read into the historical records the Christology of the recorders.

Now there is a sense in which Christology is part of the evidence for the historical Christ. We cannot entirely free ourselves, even in the most rarefied atmosphere of criticism, from the medium of Christological belief through which the facts have been handed down to us. Our ultimate data will always be not facts, but reports of facts; not what Christ really was—as though there could be any possible way in which a direct (that is, a personal or adequate) impression of Him could have been recorded in history—but what He seemed to men to be.

Nevertheless, this concession, though true, is almost beside the point, when we come to deal with the actual documents. For it is not true, here, that the critic misses the facts unless he reads into the records the Christology

of the recorders. *It has been read into them already.* St. Matthew's representation of Jesus is based partly on the Christology of the Virgin Birth, partly on an older theory —the anointing of Christ at His Baptism—which he inherits from St. Mark. St. Paul and the early chapters of Acts suggest another and still earlier theory, when they connect the divinity of Christ with the Resurrection; and St. John supplies a fourth in his doctrine of the pre-existence of the Divine Word.[1] Again, it is misleading to suggest that St. Mark's insistence on the humanity of Christ must be corrected by his implicit belief in His divinity. That St. Mark held such a belief in some form is not doubted; but there is no need to read it into his Gospel: it is evident there already, in the emphasis that is given to this fact or to that, or in the tendency with which many incidents are presented.

In short, if we are to use the Christian documents as evidence for the historical facts about Christ, we have no need to *add* the Christology of the Evangelists; we have rather to *subtract* it. There is no such thing as a purely historical Gospel, a bare record of facts. All the Gospels are more or less sermons, works of apologetic, manuals of theology. In all of them the facts are interpreted by faith. In all of them the historical Jesus is to a greater or less extent endowed with the ideal qualities of the Christ whom the Church came to worship as God.

The development of the miraculous element in the Gospels is only one instance of this general principle. We will proceed without any more preface to the consideration of it.

(ii)

In dealing with St. Mark's evidence for miracles we have to determine at the outset the relation between the miracle-

[1] It is not meant that these theories are necessarily exclusive of one another.

stories and the sources of the Gospel. If the Gospel is a compilation from two or more sources, the question of authority is at once complicated: there can be no dead level of credibility.

We have, in fact, to posit at least three possible strata of evidence:—

P, the underlying Petrine or Apostolic tradition;
Q, the early Collection of Sayings; and
M, the editorial modifications or additions of St. Mark.

All these strata occur, for instance, in the first chapter of the Gospel.[1]

(1) Mk. i. 1 is clearly editorial (M)—a heading or short preface for what is to follow. The use of 'Jesus Christ' as a proper name shows that the writer shares a point of view which was not reached until the time of the later epistles of St. Paul. On the other hand, 'Gospel' does not yet mean a written record, but the message and faith which were the subject of it. 'Son of God,' if the MSS. authority be thought sufficient for its retention, is used in an advanced theological sense, and represents, as a preface ordinarily does, not the premises of the argument, but its conclusion.

(2) i. 2-13, the account of the preaching of the Baptist, and of the Baptism and Temptation of Christ, is probably a summary of Q, which is here quoted at much greater length by Mt. and Lk. Two small points indicate this. (i) The quotation from Mal. iii. 1, 'Behold, I send My messenger,' occurs in quite a different context in Mt. xi. 10= Lk. vii. 27. St. Mark has transferred it from its original setting in Q to the present passage. Its form, which (unlike most of his quotations) is not that of the LXX., shows that he has taken it from Q. Having transferred it, he combines it with the quotation from Is. xl. 3 which follows, and attributes both to Isaiah. (ii) The original form of

[1] *v.* Bacon, *The Beginnings of Gospel History*, *ad loc.*

the same passage in Malachi, which is referred to again in Mk. i. 8, suggests a baptism of *fire* ; and this, which was almost certainly the sense of Q, is preserved in the parallel passages, Mt. iii. 11 and Lk. iii. 16. But St. Mark has adapted it to contemporary ideas by substituting 'He shall baptise you with the *Holy Ghost*' ; and this reappears, side by side with the original idea of fire, in Mt. and Lk.

(3) The call of the first apostles, and the series of incidents associated with the first Sabbath day's ministry in Capernaum (i. 14-39), clearly belong to the underlying narrative tradition, P.

These three strata of evidence, which can be so easily traced in the first chapter of the Gospel, reappear throughout. There are also a few incidents which are possibly to be attributed to other sources. Roughly speaking, we may divide up the Gospel as follows [1] :—

P. Verses, ...	340
Q. ,, ...	120
M. ,, ...	110
Doubtful sources, . . .	90

That is to say, there are approximately three parts of P to one each of Q, M, and doubtful sources.

The next point to discover is the distribution of miraculous stories among these sources. We must here assume for the moment a classification and some figures that will emerge at a rather later point of the inquiry. The distribution may be tabulated as follows :—

Miracle-stories.	P.	Q.	M.	Doubtful.
Visions, . .	1	2	...	...
Cures, . . .	9	...	...	3
Wonders, . .	4	...	...	1

[1] The figures are based on Bacon's analysis (*op. cit.*), and are admittedly hypothetical.

That is to say, there is a proportional and actual preponderance of miracle-stories in P, and a practical monopoly of one class of these stories. When we reflect that P forms the basis not only of Mk., but also, through Mk., of Mt. and Lk., the importance of this conclusion is obvious. The Petrine or Apostolic tradition is responsible for the greater part of the miraculous element in the Gospels.

(iii)

In what follows, our main endeavour will be to estimate the value of the Petrine-Marcan tradition for the internal credibility of the narratives which it presents. But something should first be said as to the probable authorship and authority of this group of traditions on external grounds.

Now a tolerably good case can be made out for the traditional ascription of the second Gospel, and, *a fortiori*, of the underlying tradition P, to John Mark, the son of that Mary whose house was the meeting-place of the 'church' at Jerusalem (Acts xii. 12). If this was his home during the years after the Resurrection, St. Mark must have been frequently in contact with the brethren who used the house for their prayer meetings and breaking of bread. If it was in the 'upper chamber' of this house that the apostles, the women, and the mother and brethren of Jesus 'were abiding' (Acts i. 13) during the first days after the Ascension, we can probably infer that St. Mark moved in the inner circle of the disciples. And if we may go a step further back, and identify this 'upper chamber' with the 'large upper room,' used as a 'guest-chamber,' in which the Last Supper was celebrated (Mk. xiv. 14-15), there is good reason for thinking that St. Mark was present in Jerusalem during the last week, which his Gospel describes so minutely, and that he saw the coming and going of the apostles on the night of the betrayal. Indeed, it is not unreasonable

to go further. Why should Mk. mention the superfluous incident of the 'young man' who followed the apostles from the supper-room to Gethsemane in such haste that he only had time to throw a single garment round him, and who was so fearful of capture that he 'left the linen cloth and fled naked,' unless this person was St. Mark himself? (Mk. xiv. 51-52). Nor is this inconsistent with Papias's statement that St. Mark was not a hearer or follower of Jesus (Euseb. *H.E.* iii. 39), or with the notice of the Muratorian Fragment (Swete, *St. Mark*, p. xxiii.); indeed, both these bits of evidence are in harmony with the view that St. Mark was a young man who did not come into contact with Jesus and His disciples until the last week at Jerusalem, but from that time was tolerably well known to them.

On this hypothesis St. Mark's general acquaintance with the apostolic circle makes him a good authority for the early apostolic tradition; and whilst there is no evidence that he had any first-hand knowledge of the Galilean ministry with which to check this tradition, there is considerable evidence that he was in a position to describe the events of the last week at Jerusalem from his own observation, and from contemporary hearsay.

If this is so, it falls in with the very uneven distribution of material which characterises St. Mark's Gospel, and, through him, Mt. and Lk. The Gospel tradition falls roughly into two groups—the first being a collection of more or less isolated acts and words scattered over a period of about a year, and the second a comparatively detailed and continuous account of the incidents of a single week. This distribution of material has set the pattern of the other Gospels, and we are so accustomed to it that it does not surprise us as it ought to do. It is not fully accounted for by the well-known fact that the Crucifixion and the Resurrection were the chief subjects of preaching in the Early Church: they were preached (one can see from St. Peter's sermons in Acts) with a bareness of historical

detail hardly adequate for their fulness of theological development. More explanation is needed; and the natural hypothesis is that St. Mark wrote more fully about the last week because he knew more about it.

(iv)

The possibility of St. Mark's general acquaintance with the apostles becomes more definite in the case of the most important witness of them all. From Acts xii. 12 we might reasonably infer that he knew St. Peter. Gal. ii. 13 perhaps implies that, as a disciple of Barnabas, he was one of the Judaisers who influenced St. Peter and were rebuked by St. Paul. In 1 Pet. v. 13 (if we can accept this authority) St. Peters refers to him as ' my son,' as though the younger man owed his conversion to the elder. And Papias's tradition is well known, that St. Mark acted (during part, at least, of his life) as the interpreter (ἑρμηνευτής) of St. Peter, and founded his Gospel on the reminiscences of the first apostle (Euseb. *H.E.* iii. 39; *v.* discussion in Swete, *St. Mark*, p. xxiii.).

On the other hand, a considerable amount of evidence connects him, not with St. Peter, but with St. Paul, whom he accompanies on the first missionary journey (Acts xii. 25, xiii. 5), whom he rejoins (in spite of the quarrel in Acts xv. 39) at Rome (Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24), and by whom he is again invited to Rome during the last imprisonment (2 Tim. iv. 11). So little opportunity seems to be left for the association with St. Peter that some critics altogether reject it as unhistorical, and others are driven to the hypothesis that there were two (or more) St. Marks. Yet there is at any rate one period of about ten years, between his visit with Barnabas to Cyprus (Acts xv. 39) and his appearance at Rome, in which we lose sight of St. Mark. And the tradition of his connection with St. Peter is so strong that it would be rash to exclude this possibility.

One may strengthen the case for 'St. Peter's reminiscences' by remarking how few incidents there are, especially in the earlier part of the Gospel, that might not have been reported by him. The focus of interest in the early months is either Capernaum, where St. Peter shared a house with his wife, her mother, and his unmarried brother Andrew, or the shore of the lake, where he kept his boat, and carried on his fisher's trade. In the journey to the north, and again on the return towards Jerusalem, St. Peter is constantly with Jesus. He is one of the chosen three who are present at the moments of greatest power and deepest emotion. There are three incidents which could only have been reported (if not by Jesus Himself) by St. Peter, St. James, or St. John (v. 37, ix. 2, xiv. 33); and a few at the beginning of the ministry that would only have been known to the same body of first disciples with the addition of St. Andrew (i. 21, i. 29, i. 32). There are also several occasions on which St. Peter is specially identified by this Gospel (i. 36, xi. 21, xiii. 3, xvi. 7). Nor ought this last point to be outweighed by the failure to make further identifications, or to insert other stories about St. Peter, in the manner of St. Matthew (xiv. 28, xv. 15, xvi. 18, xvii. 24, xviii. 21) and St. Luke (v. 3, xii. 41, xxii. 31); for there is sufficient evidence that some of these references were not omitted by St. Peter's modesty from his own reminiscences, but were rather added to them by the piety of a later generation.

On such lines a fair case may be made out for attributing P to John Mark, and for connecting it with the reminiscences of St. Peter. At the same time, it would be unwise to lay very great stress upon an argument in which so much is hypothetical. We have already noticed the difficulty of finding time for the association of John Mark with St. Peter. More than one step in the argument which brings him into connection with the apostolic circle at Jerusalem is also open to doubt. In particular, it has been lately suggested that the incident of the young man (Mk. xiv. 51-52)

was influenced by the prophecy, 'And he that is courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day' (Amos ii. 16).[1] Again, it would be attractive to regard the fulness with which the events of the Passion are described, even after St. Peter himself leaves the scene (Mk. xiv. 72), as pointing to St. Mark's eye-witness. But we find that the account of the Crucifixion (at least) has been so worked over from an apologetic and devotional point of view that it may be doubted how far we can recover from it the evidence of a contemporary resident in Jerusalem.[2]

Finally, as regards the Petrine tradition, it would be a little absurd to suppose that one who had so many opportunities of collecting evidence as to the facts of Jesus' life would rely exclusively upon the reminiscences of a single apostle. Many of the stories that St. Mark sets down he may have heard years before, as part of the gossip of his mother's friends; some would have been heard again and again, from different narrators, and in different words. Certain crucial sayings of the Lord would assume a fixed form; certain acts would be described in the same way; some bits of local colour and vividness would stamp themselves on the mind, when less peculiar and perhaps more important details varied. Thus the 'Marcan Characteristics' can quite easily be accounted for, not as signs of the author's first-hand knowledge of the scenes he describes, nor as the peculiarities of a single written or oral source, but as the effect left upon the mind of the hearer by the simple, vivid talk of a number of men who had been through a great experience and were trying to describe it. It would be unsafe to dogmatise upon the result of this evidence. But probably we shall be right in accepting the traditional Petrine-Marcan authorship of (at least) the original form of the P-narrative.

[1] Loisy, *Les Évangiles Synoptiques*, i. 101; Bacon, *The Beginnings of Gospel History*, p. x.

[2] Notice the references to ecclesiastical 'hours' (xv. 25, 33, 34), the analogy of incident to prophecy (xv. 23, 24, 29, 36), and the introduction of symbolical events (xv. 33, 38).

(v)

We pass to the consideration of the internal evidence; and we confine ourselves for the present to the source P, which, as we have already seen, contains the great majority of the miracle-stories. Let us begin by seeing how they are distributed in this source. P falls into two halves of almost equal bulk—

Part I., dealing with the Galilean ministry (i. 1.-viii. 26).

Part II., dealing with the Judean ministry (viii. 27-xvi. 8)

The distribution is as follows—

	Part I.	Part II.
Visions, . . .	0	1
Cures, . . .	7	2
Wonders, . . .	4	0

The enormous preponderance of miraculous stories in Part I. is the more remarkable when we consider that all three 'doubtful' cures (*v.* table on p. 25) also fall within Part I. of the Gospel, that the two cures assigned to Part II. both occur in chapters ix.-x., and fall outside the Judean ministry proper (chapters xi.-xvi.), which shows *no* cures, and that all the 'wonders' are concentrated in three chapters (iv.-vi.) of Part I.

In other words, the miracle-stories belong to Galilee, not to Jerusalem, to the earlier and obscurer times of the ministry, and to the enthusiasm of the lake-side fisher-folk. There is no reason to suppose that the compiler of the Gospel, whether John Mark or another, had been there. Even if he wrote down St. Peter's reminiscences, it was many years after the events. By the time that Christ entered Jerusalem the facts were already beginning to be forgotten. By the time that the Gospels came to be written they were ancient history, and it was too late—even if any one had wished to do so—to corroborate the evidence. As a matter of fact, it was not until a yet later stage of development that the question of evidence was seriously raised.

This is not all. If the great majority of the miracle-stories belong to the earlier times of Jesus' ministry, and few or none to the later, is that not a significant comment on the fact that in that ministry a time of public enthusiasm was followed by a period of opposition and retirement? Why is it not only that so few cures can be worked in faithless Nazareth,[1] but also that no storms are calmed, or bread multiplied, or dead raised in hostile Judæa, but only in friendly Galilee? If the faith of the patient explains the cure, does not the enthusiasm of the crowd explain the miracle? If St. Peter relates no miracles towards the end of Christ's ministry,[2] is not that because, in a less romantic atmosphere, he has come to know Him better than he did?

(vi)

We will now deal with each class of miracle-stories separately. (1) First, as regards the visions: these may be enumerated as follows:—

i. 9. The Baptism
i. 12. The Temptation } from Q.
ix. 2. The Transfiguration.
[xvi. 5. The young man at the tomb.]

The last of these, however, will be best treated separately under the subject of the Resurrection, and may be ignored here. All the rest occur in the earlier part of the Gospel, and mark turning-points in its psychological (or, if that word be disallowed) historical development. The Baptism is Jesus' Call; the Temptation is His Preparation; the Transfiguration is His acceptance of His Mission. Moreover, not only the Temptation, but also the vision at the Baptism (as St. Mark's account shows) is probably based on information derived from Jesus Himself; and the Transfiguration, though in a secondary sense a revelation to the

[1] Mk. vi. 5.
[2] For the incident of the withered fig-tree, *v.* p. 48.

apostles, is primarily a vision seen by Jesus Himself. Thus the evidence for these events, in their original form, is good.

This is as we should expect. Nothing would be more probable than that Jesus, with His intense faith in God, and His habit of visualising cases of madness or epilepsy as 'possession' by evil spirits, should, at the crises of His spiritual life, see visions. Special gratitude is due to the 'eschatological' school of critics for bringing out this side of the life and thought of Jesus.[1]

At the same time, all our knowledge of the psychology of religion tends to show that there is nothing miraculous in such visions. Moses and Elijah, like the emblematical dove and the personified powers of evil, were immaterial, intangible, the stuff of dreams. Visions, voices, and other spiritualistic experiences are common accompaniments of religious fervour all the world over.[2] We do not yet understand exactly what happens in such cases; but, so far as our knowledge goes, there is no special intrusion of supernatural elements into the natural sequence of events. That is, there is no miracle.

(vii)

(2) Secondly, as regards the works of healing: it will be best to give a list of these incidents, stating in each case the nature of the disease cured.

Reference.	Patient.	Disease.
i. 21.	man.	unclean spirit.
i. 29.	woman.	fever.
i. 40.	man.	leprosy.
ii. 3.	man.	paralysis.
iii. 1.	man.	withered hand.
v. 1.	man.	unclean spirit.
v. 25.	woman.	issue of blood.
vii. 25.	girl.	unclean spirit.

[1] *e.g.* J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, second edition, p. 90 f.

[2] A good modern instance is the *Journal of George Fox, the Quaker* (abridged edition, London, 1906); *v.* especially the famous incident at Lichfield, p. 57.

Reference.	Patient.	Disease.
vii. 32.	man.	deafness, and an impeded speech.
viii. 22.	man.	blindness.
ix. 14.	boy.	dumb and deaf spirit.
x. 46.	man.	blindness.

Eight other cases, where the reference is indirect, or where no details are given, are of little evidential value, and may be ignored.

This list may be summarised as follows :—

Patients.—Men, 8 ; women, 2 ; boys, 1 ; girls, 1.

Diseases.—Defects of sight, hearing, or speech, 4 (including one so bad as to be called ' possession ') ; paralysis (including the ' withered hand '), 2 ; ' fever,' 1 ; leprosy, 1 ; ' issue of blood,' 1 ; possessions by ' unclean spirits,' 3.

It will be well to examine these cures in more detail, with a view to discovering whether or not they imply anything miraculous.

1. *Defects of sight, hearing, and speech.*—These cures form a rather distinct group, but whether by accident or design it is impossible to say. The first case is peculiar to St. Mark (vii. 32), and is related by him with some particularity. The patient is a *deaf man* with ' an impediment in his speech ' (*i.e.* probably a stammer). It is a specially difficult case, treated privately ; and it is not to be cured, as the crowd expect, by the simple laying on of Jesus' hand, but only by putting His fingers into the man's ears, and His spittle on his tongue, together with prayer. The incident is omitted by St. Matthew and St. Luke, apparently on the ground that the method of cure was not easy and miraculous enough.

The second is another case which St. Mark alone describes (viii. 22), of a *blind man.* Here, too, the mere touch is not enough. The cure is gradually done—first, by the application of spittle to the eyes, and by laying the hands upon them ; then by a second laying on of hands. The incident is probably omitted by St. Matthew and St. Luke on the same grounds as the last, that it is not sufficiently miraculous. In both cases Jesus used a treatment com-

monly employed by ancient physicians; but the cure was at least as much due to the faith of the patient.[1]

The next case (ix. 14) is the exorcism of a *dumb and deaf spirit*, described in considerable detail by St. Mark, and more generally by St. Matthew (xvii. 14 f.) and St. Luke (ix. 37 f.), who are still influenced by distaste for the sordid circumstances of Jesus' works of healing. The first part of the cure—the actual exorcism—is done, as Jesus always did it, by a word of command; the patient is, however, left so weak (the crowd indeed think him dead) that Jesus must complete the cure by taking him by the hand and raising him up. The power upon which Jesus relies is not a magical formula, but prayer; yet, unless exorcism is miraculous, there is nothing miraculous in this story. The fourth case, that of a *blind man* (x. 46), is an instance of faith-healing, pure and simple, without any act on the part of Jesus.

In none of these cases do there seem to be sufficient grounds for asserting that the cures go beyond the ascertained or ascertainable results of faith-healing. In none need we posit a miracle.[2]

2. *Paralysis.*—Hysterical paralysis, or 'functional paraplegia,' is particularly amenable to faith-healing. The case that Jesus healed (ii. 3) was probably of this kind, though an exceptional one ('We never saw it on this fashion'). The man is carried in on a bed: all the circumstances mark the intense faith of himself and his friends. When the appeal is made that he should exert himself, and do what he believes to be impossible, he rises, takes up his bed, and walks out in the sight of all. The case of the *withered hand* (iii. 1) was probably of a similar kind. Again, no touch is needed; appeal is made to the man's faith: the useless hand is suddenly to be used. 'Stretch forth thy hand,' says Jesus. 'He stretched it forth,' and his hand was, in

[1] *e g.* Pliny, *H.N.* xxviii. 7, and the evidence for a similar cure worked by the Emperor Vespasian (Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 81; Suetonius, *Vespas.* vii.).

[2] *v.* Preface; cp. p. 39 f.

the very act, 'restored.' The method is just that which a modern faith-healer would use.[1] The power of drawing out faith was exceptional. But there was no miracle.

3. *Fever.*—'Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a *fever*' (i. 30). Jesus 'came, and took her by the hand, and raised her up, and the fever left her.' Here, as generally in medical cases, Jesus touched the patient; but the lifting up was, perhaps, like the command to stretch out the hand, a direct appeal to the patient to do something for herself: she had faith, did it, and was healed.

4. *Leprosy.*—It was an act of extreme charity to touch a leper; yet Jesus' compassion leads Him to do this (i. 41), and 'straightway the leprosy departed from him.' Faith cures are common enough in the case of skin diseases, but they are generally gradual. The narrative only approaches the miraculous if this was a real case of leprosy, and was healed instantly and completely (as 'show thyself to the priest' suggests). But there was plenty of room for error in all these points.[2]

5. The cure of the woman with an *issue of blood* (v. 25) is a thorough case of faith-healing, and closely akin to (*e.g.*) many of the 'miracles' of Lourdes. The statement that (in spite of His not expecting the woman's touch) Jesus felt 'that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth,' apparently expresses a theory of His disciples which He Himself does not accept; for He says to the woman, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.'

6. The cases of *possession* are the most numerous of all. In three cases the 'spirits' are described as 'unclean,' and once as 'dumb and deaf.'

The belief in 'possession' and the practice of exorcism

[1] Hudson (*The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, chaps. 23-24) even suggests that Jesus had mastered intuitively most of the laws of modern mental therapeutics.

[2] The miracles of St. Thomas of Canterbury contain many well-attested stories of this kind. Indeed no saint, according to the chroniclers, in the Old Dispensation or the New, has equalled St. Thomas in his cures of leprosy, total or partial; *v.* Abbott, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, vol. i. §§ 544-547.

are phenomena common to many races and many religions. Among uneducated people, before the growth of psychology or medical science, madness, epilepsy, and the more violent or intractable forms of certain diseases are commonly believed to be the work of an alien spirit inhabiting the body of the patient. The case is treated by a primitive kind of psychotherapeutics, which relies chiefly on the power of certain formulæ or incantations. There is evidence in the Gospels themselves that such cures were practised among the Jews of Christ's time. 'Master,' says St. John, 'we saw one casting out devils in Thy name: and we forbade him, because he followed not us' (Mk. ix. 38=Lk. ix. 49). Christ accepts the 'miracle'; and on another occasion He makes use of the practice as an argument: 'If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?' (Mt. xii. 27=Lk. xi. 19, from Q). St. Paul used exorcism successfully at Philippi (Acts xvi. 18)—an incident that may have inclined St. Mark (if he had heard of it from St. Paul) to emphasise this element in Christ's works of healing. And at Ephesus his success, even by indirect means, was so great that the professional exorcists borrowed his form of incantation, and tried to rival his results (Acts xix. 11-16). In fact, the evidence shows clearly enough that Christ's powers of exorcism, though attributed by Himself to prayer, not to magic, were similar to those of other healers of the time, only more potent, and that, whether or not they were regarded as miraculous, they were not so in reality.[1]

The phenomena of 'possession' are well known to modern

[1] The existence of Jewish Books of Magic shows that 'the superstition that had sprung from the soil of the heathen nature-religions also continued to flourish with no little vigour among the people of Israel. . . .' As nowadays, so 'in the ancient world, at least in that part of it that was under the influence of the East, there was often a tendency to have recourse to the magician and the exorcist rather than to the regular doctor in every sort of ailment. . . . Magic and exorcism, and that above all for curative purposes, were uncommonly popular and prevalent throughout the entire Roman Empire. Nor did the Jewish People form an exception. We know from the Old and

spiritualistic psychology, and are being explained on scientific lines. 'I know of no evidence,' says Mr. F. W. H. Myers,[1] 'reaching in any way our habitual standard—either for angelical, for diabolical, or for hostile possession. . . . A devil is not a creature whose existence is independently known to science; and the accounts of the behaviour of the invading devils seems due to mere self-suggestion. . . . Especially in the Middle Ages—amid powerful self-suggestions of evil and terror—did these quasi-possessions reach an intensity and violence which the calm and sceptical atmosphere of the modern hospital checks and discredits. The devils with terrifying names which possessed Sœur Angélique of Loudun [2] would at the Salpêtrière under Charcot in our days have figured merely as stages of "clounisme" and "attitudes passionelles."'

A great body of evidence for 'the savage theory of dæmoniacal possession and obsession, which has been for ages, and still remains, the dominant theory of disease and inspiration among the lower races,' may be found in Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 114 f. Some ecclesiastical instances are collected by Schmiedel in *E.B.* 1884.[3]

New Testaments, as well as from Josephus, how extensively the various forms of magic prevailed also among them.' A special instance of magical exorcism is given by Josephus, *Antt.* viii. 2, 5. Books embodying Solomonic incantations were current among Christians as well as Jews, *e.g. Contradictio Salomonis* and *Testamentis Salomonis* (the second is still extant). [Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, Div. II. vol. iii. p. 152.] Cp. the incident in Acts xix. 19, and Ramsay in *Hastings' D.B.* i. 722.

[1] *Human Personality*, ii. 198-199.

[2] An Ursuline sister of the seventeenth century, whose autobiography was edited by two French physicians in the *Bibliothèque Diabolique*, 1886.

[3] On the question of Christ's acceptance of the theory of demoniacal possession, cf. Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion* (cheap edition), p. 180, and the editor's note, which raises the unnecessary difficulty that 'The emphasis which Jesus Christ lays on diabolic agency is so great that, if it is not a reality, He must be regarded either as seriously misled about realities which concern the spiritual life, or else as seriously misleading others. And in neither case could He be even the perfect Prophet.' Is not this to underrate the thoroughness of Christ's humanity? Cp. Estlin Carpenter, *Studies in Theology*, p. 270.

We may add a modern instance of the same phenomenon from the experience of John Wesley.[1] 'Thursday 25. I was sent for to one in Bristol, who was taken ill the evening before . . . she lay on the ground, furiously gnashing her teeth, and after a while roared aloud. It was not easy for three or four persons to hold her, especially when the name of Jesus was named. We prayed; the violence of her symptoms ceased, though without a complete deliverance. . . .

[In the evening he visits her again.] 'She began screaming before I came into the room; then broke out into a horrid laughter, mixed with blasphemy grievous to hear. One who, from many circumstances, apprehended a preternatural agent to be concerned in this, asking, "How dost thou dare to enter into a Christian?" was answered, "She is not a Christian; she is mine."—*Q.* "Dost thou not tremble at the name of Jesus?" No words followed, but she shrank back and trembled exceedingly.—*Q.* "Art thou not increasing thy own damnation?" It was faintly answered, "Aye, aye," which was followed by fresh cursing and blaspheming. My brother coming in, she cried out, "Preacher! Field-preacher! I don't love field-preaching." This was repeated two hours together, with spitting, and all the expressions of strong aversion. We left her at twelve, and called again about noon, on Friday. And now it was that God showed He heareth the prayer. All her pangs ceased in a moment. She was filled with peace, and knew that the son of wickedness was departed from her.'

As regards cures other than those described as exorcism, the evidence is equally clear. Many religions—perhaps nearly all religions—encourage some kind of faith-healing. The practice of 'incubation' was common in Greek temples, and survived side by side with the growth of medical science.[2] It is still common in many parts of the Levant.[3]

[1] *Journal,* reprinted in Everyman's Library, vol. i. p. 236.

[2] Reinach, *Orpheus,* E.T. p. 93.

[3] For some remarkable instances *v.* M. Hamilton, *Incubation* quoted in Dearmer, *Body and Soul,* p. 301 f.

Holy wells, reliquaries, and the tombs of saints have in every uneducated part or period of Christendom provided the necessary stimulus to faith, and produced cures analogous to those in the Gospels. In modern times, the official records of Lourdes,[1] even after all allowances have been made for lack of evidence, are sufficiently remarkable. So is the list of cures certified by German doctors to have occurred when the Holy Coat was last displayed at Trèves in 1901.[2] The cures claimed at Lourdes include 34 cases of blindness, 24 of deafness, 3 of ichthyosis and leprosy, 9 of epilepsy, 3 of catalepsy, 11 of lameness, 8 of muscular atrophy, 7 of dumbness, and no less than 217 of paralysis.[3] The Trèves cures included 'atrophy of the optic nerve of many years' standing . . . paralysis of the arm . . . complete loss of the use of the arms and legs as a consequence of rheumatic gout . . . blindness of one eye and paralysis of one arm as a consequence of brain fever.' These facts sufficiently cover the cures recorded in St. Mark's Gospel. There is probably not one of the latter which either is not explicable or, if we knew the original facts, would not be explicable, as an instance of faith-healing.

The patients as a whole belong to the class which has always cured itself by faith—faith in a person, or in a place, or in the efficacy of a ritual act. The power to call out and exercise this faith—a power dependent upon simplicity of religious belief, calmness, and strength of will—was undoubtedly present in Jesus to an exceptional degree. But it was not a miraculous power. It worked through natural law (of which faith-healing, so far as we understand it, is a normal part), not against it.

St. Mark's authorities did not understand this. Probably Jesus Himself, with His intense belief in the present power of God, held no clear distinction between the super-

[1] *v.* Dearmer, *Body and Soul*, p. 392.
[2] *v.* Holtzmann, *Life of Jesus*, p. 193.
[3] The records cover a period of nearly fifty years.

natural agency and the natural act. More than this, it was an essential part of His religious outlook to conceive of the world as a battle-ground between God and the powers of evil. Satan was to Him a terribly real person. The Temptation was a genuine experience. Every sickness healed, every demon exorcised, was a blow struck against the kingdom of evil, a victory won for the Kingdom of God.[1] The powers at work on both sides were supernatural; the means that they used were miracles. But it does not follow that a more scientific age should not frame a more critical hypothesis. And the one most in accordance with the evidence is that which attributes to Jesus the power of the faith-healer in an exceptional degree, and no more.

To sum up: *the evidence for works of healing is good evidence, but it is not evidence for miracles.*

(viii)

(3) There remain the so-called wonders. These may be classified as follows:—

Reference.	Description.
iv. 35.	Jesus calms the wind and sea.
v. 35.	Jesus brings to life the daughter of Jairus.
vi. 35.	Jesus feeds five thousand people with a few loaves and fish.
vi. 45.	Jesus walks on a lake.
[viii. 1.	Jesus feeds four thousand people with a few loaves and fish.]
xi. 12, 20.	Jesus makes a fig-tree wither.
[xv. 33.	The darkness at the Crucifixion.]
[xv. 38.	The rending of the veil in the Temple.]

Three of these incidents have been bracketed, and may be disregarded—the Feeding of the Four Thousand, because it is probably a 'doublet,' or alternative account of the

[1] Cf. J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, second edition, p. 90 f.

Feeding of the Five Thousand, and the Darkness and the Rending of the Veil, because they are reported without any particularity, and need not, in any case, involve a miracle.

The concentration of so many of these incidents into one small part of the Gospel suggests that they rest upon the same kind of authority. They belong, in fact, to the enthusiastic days of the Galilean ministry ; they originated in the devotions of the crowd, and they were perpetuated by the traditions of the apostolic circle.

The stories, as they stand, are simple and straightforward, with some signs of first-hand evidence, and comparatively little trace of evidential motive. It is difficult to resist the impression that they are based on genuine reminiscences of the disciples.

But these stories are not unique. And the question has to be raised whether (like those analogous to them in other parts of history) they admit of a non-miraculous explanation. Let us therefore examine them in detail. This at any rate we can be sure of. No one nowadays need suppose that the miracle-stories are pure fiction, or that they deliberately give a miraculous turn to natural events. They may be mistaken, but they are perfectly honest reports of what was thought to have occurred. Again, Jesus may have believed that He had miraculous powers : but He laid no stress upon them. He refused to give a ' sign ' (Mk. viii. 12). He would hardly have been in sympathy with the way in which some of these incidents have been treated in the Gospels. Consequently the most natural line of explanation left open is that suggested by the analogy of miracle-stories all the world over, and used every day in the judgement of unusual events, that there is a tendency in the human mind, under certain conditions, to regard natural events as miraculous.

1. *The calming of the sea* (Mk. iv. 35-41).—This story appears to rest on good authority. Such details as ' He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion ' (v. 38)

have an original look. The implied rebuke of the phrase, 'Master, carest Thou not that we perish?' (in the same verse), which has been removed in Mt. and Lk., is a clear sign of early date. So is the original moral of the story, the necessity of faith in God, which St. Mark's preoccupation with the necessity of faith in Christ (vv. 40-41) has not entirely displaced. The treatment of inanimate objects as though they were animate—the use of the same language to the wind and sea as to a man with an unclean spirit (vs. 39; cf. i. 25, xi. 14, 23)—seems to be authentic.

But the incident becomes a miracle only if we think that a storm which arose from natural causes could not have subsided naturally, or that the disciples could not have attributed such an event mistakenly to something that Jesus said, or that Jesus Himself could not have accepted their misunderstanding. The first two possibilities are far from remote: the Lake of Galilee is peculiarly liable to 'sudden squalls,'[1] which go as suddenly as they come. Nor is it unlikely that Jesus Himself would interpret so striking a deliverance as a supernatural answer to the prayer of faith.[2]

2. *The raising of Jairus's daughter* (v. 21-24, 35-43).—This story, again, bears marks of good evidence, and is a constituent part of the narrative. The remarkable point about it is Jesus' determination to work a miracle. The news of the girl's death does not change His purpose (v. 36). He refuses to be dissuaded from His purpose. He refuses even to believe that the child is dead (v. 39)—and that before He has seen the body. Amid general scorn He empties the house (v. 40); and in the presence of a few friends the girl comes to life again. Some of the details of this account may have been modified on evidential

[1] Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*, 1906, p. 250.

[2] There is possibility in Loisy's suggestion (*E.S.* i. 794; cf. 941) that this story belongs to the Feeding of the Four Thousand, and is as much a doublet of the Walking on the Water as the former is of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. There seem at least to be two groups of parallel incidents here, though it is not quite clear how we should reconstruct them.

grounds; its central idea, that Jesus worked the cure in an enthusiasm of faith, is almost certainly true to life.

But was it a miracle? It could only be, if the supposition of a cataleptic trance of some kind were quite excluded. And this certainly is not the case. Instances of apparent death are not uncommon nowadays,[1] and deceive even experienced doctors. Where, as in Palestine, there was no possibility of medical diagnosis, and the funeral commonly took place very soon after death,[2] the occurrence of such incidents as those described in the Gospels was by no means unlikely. It would be easy to lay stress on the words 'the child is not dead' (v. 39) as evidence that Jesus diagnosed the case aright,[3] to compare the incident with

[1] Monseigneur Donnet, Archbishop of Bordeaux, was fond of telling the story of his own premature burial, when a youth, during a cataleptic fit (*v.* Calluaud, *Le Problème de la Résurrection du Christ*, p. 77). Cp. the following case reported in the daily papers on December 30, 1910:—

A remarkable story of a boy scout's dramatic reappearance after his supposed death following a surgical operation came from Nottingham last night.

At a social gathering of the Nottingham Wesleyan Mission Boy Scouts on Wednesday night a letter was received by Mr. D. Wright, the scoutmaster, stating that a member of the company had died.

It contained a farewell message from the boy, and a note from the nurse that the funeral arrangements would be sent later.

It was known that the boy had to undergo a surgical operation, and a week previously he had attended service at the mission, when prayers were offered for his recovery.

On receipt of the intimation of the boy's death the scout leader decided to postpone the festivities, but a profound sensation was caused by the sudden appearance of the supposed dead boy himself.

'It was all a mistake,' he explained.

'They thought I was dead, and laid me out, but when the doctor came later he saw a slight flush on my cheek, and then discovered I was breathing slightly.

'Within an hour or two I was well enough to get up, and when nurse told me a letter had been sent I determined to come here myself.'

The boy stated he had no recollection of what occurred during the twelve hours he lay in a trance, except that he lay covered only with a counterpane. He is still in a weak condition.

On several previous occasions the boy has, it is stated, been seized with faints, during which life for a considerable interval has appeared to be extinct.

[2] Tobit viii. 10-12; Acts v. 6, 10.

[3] *e.g.* Neumann, *Jesus*, p. 85. Cp. Hudson, *op. cit.* p. 351.

that of Eutychus (Acts xx. 10), and to suppose that He never claimed a miracle. But it is probably a truer psychology which refuses so facile an explanation, and lays stress rather on the imaginative and creative power of faith. The girl was not really dead. But Jesus thought her so (His saying about sleep being interpreted as in Jn. xi. 11-13), and dared to put His faith to the supreme test. He must often have been disappointed (Mk. vi. 5 records an instance); but in this case—the only one of its kind in the Gospel—the girl revived, faith was justified, and a miracle was proclaimed.[1] Such, or approximately such, were the original facts.

3. *The feeding of the five thousand* (vi. 30-44).—Probably no incident in the Gospels has been explained in so many different ways as this. To the school of Bahrdt and Venturini it is a trick carried out by a secret society. Paulus explains it as the sharing of supplies among a crowd of people, encouraged by Jesus' example. Hase suggests that there is nothing more unnatural in the sudden increase of bread than in the gradual growth of corn from seed-time to harvest. Strauss believes that the story is a myth, based on Old Testament parallels (the manna in the desert, or the miracle of Elisha). A disciple of Venturini suggests that rich friends sent an unexpected supply of food into the desert.[2]

The rationalistic line of explanation (*e.g.* Paulus) here, as in the last incident, is too simple. The mythological (*e.g.* Strauss) is too superficial. What is wanted is some reconstruction of the facts which is psychologically appropriate, which makes the original incident important enough to be reported, and the circumstances such as might give rise to the idea of a miracle.

One possible view finds the clue to the explanation in the

[1] Jesus Himself, though believing that a miracle has been worked, does not wish it to be published, and gives instructions that the child shall be fed, as though she had made a normal recovery (v. 43).

[2] Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, pp. 41, 52, 60, 84, 326.

Gospels themselves. It is suggested that a careful reading of the conversation about the 'leaven of the Pharisees' (Mk. viii. 13-21=Mt. xvi. 4-12) shows that *Jesus there refers to the feeding of the multitude as a proof that He is not talking about leaven in a literal sense, but symbolically.* That is to say, Mk. and Mt. retain, side by side with the account of the incident of feeding, a clue to its historical origin.[1] What really happened was that Jesus, in a parable analogous to that of the Sower, compared His teaching to food —not to ordinary food, but to miraculous food, which satisfies all who receive it, and increases, instead of diminishing, as it is more widely distributed (this explains the twelve basketfuls left over, which otherwise add a quite unnecessary miracle). The change of such a parable into a real event is not difficult to understand. A parallel case is afforded by the incident of the withered fig-tree (Mk. xi. 12-14, 20-23), which may be regarded as a materialisation of the parable in Lk. xiii. 6-9.[2]

But probably the most valuable clue to the meaning of the narrative is supplied by the institution of the Eucharist in the Early Church. Suppose an original incident, the exact nature of which we cannot now determine, but which must have been remarkable enough to impress itself upon the memory of the apostles, to be compared with the stories of the Old Testament prophets (1 Kings xvii. 8-16; 2 Kings iv. 42-44), and to be regarded at a comparatively early date as a miracle. This incident may have been transformed, by the pious imagination of a later generation, into the original institution of the Agapê and Eucharist. Then the account of it would be assimilated to the actual experience of Christian worship. At the Eucharist, which might sometimes be held out of doors, and at which the congregation would naturally be arranged in groups

[1] Lk. xii. 1 sees the difficulty, and omits it. Mk. vi. 52 seems to be either misplaced or interpolated: there has evidently been some doubt about Mk.'s meaning.

[2] For this view see Weiss, quoted by Schweitzer, *op. cit.* p. 129, and Schmiedel, *The Johannine Writings*, p. 102 f.

(vv. 39-40), Jesus Himself was still present among His friends; still, as Head of the Family of the faithful, blessed and brake the bread; still miraculously satisfied the utmost needs of all who came. Further, it was natural to think that, if He had performed this symbolic act once in Jewish territory, He must have done it again among the Gentiles; and thus the alternative tradition of the Feeding of the Four Thousand found ready admission to the Gospel.[1]

It is difficult to see why, unless there was some such ecclesiastical motive for its preservation, the story of this miracle should have appeared six times in the Gospels, and always with such an amount of detail. The fact that it is so often described is not a sign that the Evangelists were particularly sure that it happened, but rather that it was particularly appropriate to the needs of those for whom they wrote.

4. *The walking on the lake* (vi. 45-52).—It is a mistake to think that any one method of explanation will apply to all the stories of miracles. Thus when Bahrdt explains that Jesus really walked upon a raft,[2] or Paulus that, as He walked along the shore in a mist, He was mistaken for an apparition,[3] one feels that consistency has been bought at the price of imagination. Nor is Strauss's mythological explanation[4] satisfactory. Something must have happened sufficiently startling to give rise to the story.

Probably the original fact underlying the narrative was a psychical experience of some kind, such as the dangerous position of the disciples, and the concern of Jesus for their safety, might not unnaturally bring about. This line of explanation, with its affinity to the phenomena of visions and dreams in Acts, is suggested by more than one incident in the Gospels, *e.g.* the Baptism, Temptation, Transfiguration, and Resur-

[1] For this view *v.* Loisy, *E.S.* i. 937. [2] Schweitzer, *op. cit.* p. 41.
[3] Schweitzer, p. 52. This theory, in the modified form in which it has been revived by Menzies (*Earliest Gospel*, p. 146), is, however, worth consideration.
[4] *Life of Jesus*, p. 499 f.

rection appearances. There need be no hesitation in the attempt to apply it to the present incident.

But this may not be all. It is possible that both the survival (not the origin) of the story, and the form in which it has survived, are due to the symbolical interpretation put upon it by the Early Church. It would be taken as a type of the apostles' experience at the time of the Resurrection. Jesus had left His disciples, had ascended into a mountain (we remember that in primitive tradition the Ascension is not separated from the Resurrection), and was there alone in prayer. The disciples were embarked without Him, in the dark, in face of opposition; and though they hoped to see Him again on the farther shore (the expectation of the Parousia), they could make little headway by themselves. In the early morning (the 'fourth watch of the night' corresponds to the end of the Good Friday fast, and suggests the time of the women's visit to the sepulchre), Jesus suddenly appears, walking with Godlike ease upon the sea that is so troublesome to men (cf. Psalm lxxvii. 16, 19). The disciples all see Him at once (we remember the strong tradition of an appearance to all the apostles); but they doubt whether it is really He, until He reassures them (with Mk. vi. 50 compare Mt. xxviii. 10; Lk. xxiv. 38). Then He goes up into the boat of the Church; the wind of opposition ceases, and all is well. In corroboration of this interpretation, notice how St. Matthew carries the symbolism still further, and adds to the general appearance to the apostles the special appearance to St. Peter (Mt. xiv. 28-31). The incident (as one sees from Jn. xxi.) was regarded as St. Peter's restitution to favour after his denial: it is this idea which determines the form of St. Matthew's addition to the present passage.[1]

5. *The withering of the fig-tree* (xi. 12-14, 20-23).—There is evidently some confusion underlying Mk.'s account of this incident. If Jesus 'cursed' the fig-tree because He

[1] Cf. Loisy, *E.S* i. 944.

was disappointed at finding no fruit on it, He hardly did so because He wished to teach a moral lesson. If His intention was to teach a moral lesson, why is the statement made that He came to the tree because He was hungry, and hoped to find figs on it ? Further, the lesson which is actually attached to the incident—the importance of faithful prayer—has no proper connection with it ; for it is not said that Jesus had prayed, or that He had foretold, or even foreseen, the withering of the tree. Indeed, so long as we start from the presumption that we are here dealing simply with a story of fact, we shall probably fail to find any solution. The clue seems rather to be given by Lk.'s parable of the fig-tree (Lk. xiii. 6), which was doubtless interpreted as symbolical of the visit of Jesus (the owner) to Jerusalem (the fig-tree). In the parable a time of respite is asked for, and granted ; and this perhaps reappears in the interval between the ' cursing ' of the tree and the accomplishment of the curse in Mk.—a point which St. Matthew misses, in his endeavour to emphasise the miracle, by telescoping the incident, and by making the tree ' immediately ' wither away (Mt. xxi. 19). But subsequently the parable was either combined with an incident which we cannot now reconstruct, or was simply materialised into the form in which it appears in Mk. ; and the historical rejection of Judaism was represented by the withering away of the tree.

Allowance must also be made in this story for contemporary ideas of the nature and validity of a curse.[1]

(ix)

In trying to explain how these five narratives may have come to assume their present form, we have been holding the balance between at least four distinct methods of interpretation.

1. There is, first, the Rationalistic method, which holds that a natural event was afterwards transformed into a

[1] *v.* p. 125.

miracle. As a general description of the growth of miracle-stories this is reasonable enough. The mistake is to think that the original event *was taken to be natural at the time when it occurred.* If it had been, it would not have been remembered. There must nearly always have been remarkable features in the original circumstances to account for the transformation of the natural event into something supernatural. Probably in most cases it was regarded as a miracle almost from the first.

2. The Mythological method explains the miracle-stories as invented to fulfil prophecies, or to assimilate Jesus to the heroes of the Old Testament. But this theory, though it may explain the modification of narratives, cannot generally account for their origination. Small incidents, such as the entry into Jerusalem on *two* beasts (Mt. xxi. 2), the price of Jesus' betrayal (Mt. xxvi. 15, xxvii. 3 f.), or the treatment of the clothes at the Crucifixion (Jn. xix. 23), may have been due to the wish to fulfil prophecy in fact; in larger issues prophecy is generally corroborative, not creative. It takes the form of what the Germans call *Reflexionscitate.*

3. The Literary method lays emphasis on the changes which have come into the narratives through the zeal or the stupidity of a long series of scribes. Doubtless this factor was of great importance, especially at a very early stage in the history of the documents. We shall see some important instances of it in the editing of Mk. by St. Matthew and St. Luke. But though a given story may be 'improved' in this way, it is not often that a miracle is invented.

4. The Symbolical method of explanation is probably the most suggestive of all. Its importance is that it finds the motive for the elaboration of miracle-stories in the theological, devotional, or ecclesiastical interests of the generation for whom the Gospels were written. Those interests were, after all, dominant considerations in the minds of the men who compiled the Gospels. These writers

thought little of historical science, but much of the Christian faith. Their choice of incidents, and their method of presenting them, was chiefly determined by what are clumsily called 'ætiological' motives. In other words, they recorded what seemed to them to be of permanent value; and 'permanent value' meant (as it generally does) 'present interest.' [1]

But it would be a mistake to rely entirely upon any one method of interpretation where the subject-matter is so obscure. The tendency to transform natural events into supernatural, the love of assimilation, the ease with which an editor can give a new turn to a passage, and the influence of present interests upon the representation of the past—all these have played their part in the formation of the miracle-stories as they now stand. If there is the greater difficulty in choosing the best method of interpretation, there is the greater confidence that by one or another it will be possible to arrive at an approximate reconstruction of the original non-miraculous facts.

[1] The dominant interests of the successive decades of Church history from 30 to 70 A.D. are conveniently summarised by Professor Petrie in an otherwise fantastic little book, *The Growth of the Gospels*, p. 35.

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CHAPTER IV

THE EVIDENCE OF Q

(i)

Q is the sign generally adopted for the supposed early source (German *Quelle*) used first by St. Mark to supplement P, and afterwards—both in its original form, and in its secondary form in Mk.—by St. Matthew and St. Luke, in the compilation of their Gospels.

As regards the nature of this source, however, critics are at present much divided. For whereas, on the one hand, some of them have reconstructed and commented upon the supposed document,[1] others have denied that it ever existed.[2] Nevertheless, the recently published *Studies in the Synoptic Problem, by Members of the University of Oxford*, gives official sanction to this document. And the most reasonable view seems to be that the reconstructions of Q, based upon the material outside Mk. which is common to Mt. and Lk., correspond roughly to a real collection of early material, though we cannot determine with certainty the limits or the character of this source. Thus, although Mt. and Lk. contain much longer extracts from Q than Mk. does, it by no means follows that they contain it all, or adequately represent its character. Prof.

[1] *e.g.* Harnack, *Sprüche und Reden Jesu*, E.T. *The Sayings of Jesus*; Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, p. 66; Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, pt. ii.; Hawkins, in *Studies*, p. 96 f.; cp. Burkitt, *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, p. 116.

[2] *e.g.* Allen, *St. Matthew*, p. xlviii. Cp. a later and modified expression of this view in *Studies*, p. 235 f.; also Bartlet, *ibid.* p. 315 f.

Burkitt rightly points out[1] that a reconstruction of Mk. from the form in which it is reproduced in Mt. and Lk. would miss some of its most characteristic features, besides introducing into it elements which really belong to Q. Nevertheless, 'as Matthew and Luke have treated Mark, so no doubt they have treated Q, and if they have retained the essential when they have made use of Mark, they will have retained the essential when they have made use of Q.'[2]

Consequently, for our present purpose, we may assume that there was an early body of tradition dealing mainly with the sayings of Jesus; and we may very well take, as at any rate an outline of it, Harnack's reconstructed Q. In this form it contains fifty-nine sections, varying in length from one to eleven verses, and containing altogether a little under two hundred verses. It is thus a short document, though its contributions to Mt. and Lk. are scattered over a wide area. The only *incidents* which it mentions are the Baptist's preaching, the Temptation, the Sermon on the Mount, the healing of the Centurion's servant, the Baptist's message to Jesus, and the casting out of a dumb devil: the rest is all teaching.

(ii)

We may compare the distribution of miraculous narratives in Q with that in P as follows:—

	P (340 v.).	Q (200 v.).
Visions, . .	1	2
Cures, . . .	9	3
Wonders, . .	4	0

In the first place, then, Q is remarkably free from miraculous elements, resembling in this respect the later

[1] *Earliest Sources*, p. 41. [2] *Ibid.* p. 109.

rather than the earlier part of Mk. And in the second place, it bears out the evidence for the predominance of works of healing. These facts suggest that Q is an early and good authority. So there is the more need to examine with some care those few incidents which might be called miracles.

(iii)

1. Q, as we have seen, is responsible for the account of the Baptism and Temptation, fully reproduced only by St. Matthew and St. Luke (Mk. i. 12-13=Mt. iv. 1-11= Lk. iv. 1-13). There are some elements in Q's account that might represent Jesus' own explanation of His experience, but others have an artificial look. In any case the incidents fall under what has already been said about visionary experiences, and cannot be regarded as miraculous.

2. The healing of the *centurion's servant* (Mt. viii. 5-13 =Lk. vii. 1-10, xiii. 28-30). The case is described by St. Matthew as one of palsy, and serious; for the patient is 'grievously tormented.' Yet his main interest is not in the cure, but in the faith of the centurion, who believes that a miracle can be done by a mere word, and at a distance. It is this faith which is commended in the two sayings that form the climax of the incident; and the fact of the cure comes in rather lamely at the end. St. Luke, with a different moral in view, is even more careless of the miracle. The disease is not described, and the notice that the patient was 'at the point of death' is not a medical detail, but a heightening of the distress, like 'who was dear unto him'—a characteristic of this Gospel. St. Luke's interest is in the centurion, though he regards him not (as St. Matthew does) as a pattern of faith, but as a type of the pious and humble Gentile. It seems likely, indeed, that Lk.'s transcription of Q has been largely modified by assimilation to the stories of Jairus, and of the centurion Cornelius in Acts. Instead of coming to Jesus himself,

he sends first certain elders (who, as Jews, commend the piety of the Gentile), and then his friends (though the '*at him*' of v. 9 shows that St. Luke knew of the original version, in which the man himself came). One saying about faith comes in awkwardly at the end, and the other is transferred to a different context. The cure becomes even more of an anticlimax than in Mt.

The only element in the case which at first suggests a miracle—the healing at a distance—is not emphasised, and may not be a part of the original facts. If the thing really happened so, it was probably a coincidence.

Compare, for instance, the way in which, in a similar story of modern date,[1] what was really a pure coincidence is transformed into a miracle, the chief feature of which is the power of prayer to heal instantly, and at a distance.

'In October 1889, in Moscow, in the family of a certain Mr. S——ff, two children fell ill with diphtheria. Notwithstanding the measures at once taken, the illness developed rapidly, and increased. A consultation of doctors was held, and it was decided to resort to tracheotomy. One can imagine the despair of the children's parents. Having lost hope in human aid, they sent a telegram to Father John of Cronstadt, begging for his prayers. The Reverend Father received this telegram in the morning, at the time when he was performing the early Liturgy, and, as he usually does, immediately after reading the telegram, he addressed his earnest prayer to God. Meanwhile, what was taking place in Moscow? It had been decided to perform the operation of tracheotomy at two o'clock on that day, but already at nine o'clock A.M. (at the very time of Father John's prayers in Cronstadt, some five hundred miles away), the doctor who remained on duty

[1] This story is quoted in the translator's preface to *My Life in Christ*, being extracts from the diary of 'Father John' of Cronstadt, E.T. by E. E. Goulaeff, 1897. It is reproduced with apparent approval by Dearmer, *Body and Soul*, p. 382. That 'Father John' himself believed in the healing power of his prayers is shown by another incident in the same autobiography, p. 201.

noticed an improvement, which progressed as rapidly as the illness had previously developed. The doctors, having assembled at the appointed time of two o'clock P.M., found such certain improvement in the condition of the children that the operation was pronounced unnecessary. In three or four days both children completely recovered.'

Comment is unnecessary.

3. *The Baptist's message, and Jesus' answer* (Mt. xi. 2-11 =Lk. vii. 18-28).

The Baptist sends from prison to ask whether Jesus is the expected Messiah. Jesus gives as proof of His Messiahship a list of works of healing, which is a reminiscence, if not a quotation, from Isaiah.

Is. xxxv. 5.	Is. lxi. 1.	Q.
	The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me	
Then the *eyes* of the *blind* shall be opened, and the ears of the *deaf* shall be unstopped, then shall the *lame* man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.	to *preach good tidings* unto the *meek*,[1] . . . to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the *prison*[2] to them that are bound ; . . . to comfort all that mourn. . . .	the *blind* receive their *sight*, the *lame* walk, the lepers are cleansed, the *deaf* hear, the dead are raised up, and the *poor* have *good tidings preached* to them.

It is clear from this comparison that Q's list has been modified to suit the actual works of healing recorded of Jesus. But they are not those recorded in Q itself; for instance, there is no reference to the cure of paralysis (the centurion's servant), or to the casting out of devils (the dumb spirit). The list was either adapted to the needs of St. Luke, in whose Gospel it follows immediately after the raising of the widow's son at Nain (' the dead are raised

[1] 'Poor' in margin. [2] 'Eyes' in margin.

up ') ; or it was modified before it came to St. Luke (in view of St. Mark's cleansing of the leper, and the raising of Jairus's daughter), and he then inserted the Nain story in this place to fit it. In connection with this, it is curious that St. Luke should think it necessary to prefix the editorial note, ' In that hour He cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits ; and on many that were blind He bestowed sight ' (vii. 21).

Seeing how easily such modifications came about, it would be extremely rash to say that Jesus must have used exactly these words ; or that, if He used them, He must have meant to claim the power of raising people from the dead. As regards the latter point, He *may* have believed that He had worked a miracle of resuscitation in the case of Jairus's daughter. As regards the former point, nothing is clearer than that Jesus did not generally call attention to His works of healing, or treat them as evidence for His Messiahship. But they may have seemed to Him to be a confirmation of His ministry, and a sign that the Kingdom of God was already present in the world. It is therefore unnecessary to suppose that Jesus' claim was a purely spiritual one—the healing of the spiritually blind, lame, deaf, etc. (cp. Lk. vi. 39, xv. 32). And when it is urged that it is only on such an interpretation that there is proper force in the climax, ' the poor have good tidings preached to them,' [1] there is danger of attributing to Christ just that emphasis on miracles against which He protests. The preaching of the Gospel *is* the climax, to His mind.

4. *The casting out of a blind and dumb devil* (Mt. xii. 22-23=Lk. xi. 14 ; cp. Mt. ix. 32-33).

Here Mt. and Lk. agree against Mk. in prefixing this case of exorcism to a discourse on the casting out of devils. It is not likely that a corresponding incident has dropped out of Mk. ; nor that Q should have preserved independently with this prefix the same discourse that Mk. preserved without it ; nor that St. Matthew and St. Luke

[1] Schmiedel, *The Johannine Writings*, p. 108.

found it elsewhere in Q (or in an extraneous source), and agreed to put it into its present position. The most probable solution is that it was introduced originally into Mt. ix. 32, repeated (as specially appropriate) in Mt. xii. 22, and then transferred to Lk. xi. 14. In this case it does not belong to Q, but to the collection of matter peculiar to St. Matthew. In any case it is one of a large number of instances of exorcism.

5. There are two other incidental references which may be mentioned here. The first is to the '*mighty works*' done in Chorazin and Bethsaida (Mt. xi. 21=Lk. x. 13). The word used (*δυνάμεις*), as we have already seen (p. 18), need not mean anything more than works of healing. The second is the allegory of the '*unclean spirit*' (Mt. xii. 43-45=Lk. xi. 24-26), which bears vivid witness to Jesus' attitude towards cases of 'possession.'[1]

We conclude that *Q, which alone rivals P as an early and good authority, contains no evidence for miracles.*

Further, supposing that the priority of Q to Mk. can be established by the use made of it by Mk., and by the development of eschatological doctrine from Q through Mk. to Mt. (*v.* Streeter in *Studies*, pp. 166 f., 425 f.), and supposing that this can be shown to carry with it the priority of Q to P, the narrative source of Mk., then the practical non-miraculousness of Q becomes even more important. It may turn out that the development of miracles advances along the same lines as that of eschatology.

[1] These two cases, as being of small importance, are not reckoned in the tables on p. 53, etc.

CHAPTER V

THE EVIDENCE OF ST. MATTHEW

(i)

THE Gospel according to St. Matthew is the Gospel according to St. Mark re-edited, with additions. We may assume, as the established result of criticism, that its main constituents are, first, Mk. in pretty nearly the form in which we have it; secondly, Q in some such shape as Harnack's reconstruction of it; and thirdly, a number of extraneous traditions. It follows from what we have already discovered as to the nature of Mk. and Q that, where St. Matthew is dealing with these two constituents, we shall be able to check his use of them; but in the third case we have no such test of his work, and must create a standard of judgement partly from criticism of the narratives themselves, and partly from comparison of them with Mk. and Q.

It will be convenient to deal with the first two chapters of the Gospel, describing the Nativity of Jesus, separately, and in relation to the first two chapters of Lk. Again, nothing will be said here of the Resurrection, the evidence for which demands more detailed treatment.

If a comparison be made of the miracle-stories in Mt., Mk., and Q, it will appear that St. Matthew reproduces on the whole very closely the miraculous elements in his two main sources, and that the similar elements in his new material, though considerable, are not excessive, relatively to the old. Our inquiry, accordingly, must take two

forms. First, we must investigate the way in which St. Matthew edited Mk.,[1] with special reference to the supernatural elements. Secondly, we must examine the nature and authority of his new material.

(ii)

The principal points in St. Matthew's method of editing Mk. are commonly summarised as follows (*v.* Allen, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. xiii. f.) :—

1. Practically the whole of Mk. is transferred to the new Gospel. But it is interesting to notice that out of the only seven passages of any length that are omitted four are ' miraculous.'

2. Mk.'s order is considerably modified in the earlier chapters (Mt. iii.-xiii.) ; and one object of this seems to be that the miracles may be grouped together. Thus in Mt. viii.-x. there are three groups of three.

Group I. The leper (viii. 1-4).
The centurion's servant (viii. 5-13).
Peter's wife's mother (viii. 14-15).

Group II. Calming the storm (viii. 23-27).
The Gadarene demoniac (viii. 28-34).
The paralytic man (ix. 1-8).

Group III. Jairus's daughter, and the woman with the issue (ix. 18-26).
Two blind men (ix. 27-31).
The dumb devil (ix. 32-34).

The grouping is helped out by the addition of three new miracles (*italicised*)—two from Q, and one from a new source. A similar method of grouping reappears later, thus :—

Group IV. The feeding of the five thousand (xiv. 13-21).
The walking on the lake (xiv. 22-33).
Healing at Gennesaret (xiv. 34-36).

[1] In view of the uncertainty as to the text of Q, no detailed examination of St. Matthew's method of editing it is attempted.

Group V. The Syrophœnician woman (xv. 21-28).
Healing on the mountain (xv. 29-31).
The feeding of the four thousand (xv. 32-39).

And perhaps

Group VI. The Transfiguration (xvii. 1-8).
The epileptic boy (xvii. 14-20).
The coin in the fish's mouth (xvii. 24-27).

This grouping is evidence of an artificiality in St. Matthew's treatment of the miracles which ought not to be overlooked.[1]

3. St. Matthew abbreviates many of Mk.'s accounts, *e.g.* that of the epileptic boy (xvii. 14-20=Mk. ix. 14-29).

This applies chiefly to incidents, whereas :—

4. He amplifies Mk.'s discourses.

5. Many changes are stylistic.

6. A considerable number are due to theological considerations, not only references to Jesus' emotions being modified (if not omitted), but His miracles also being represented as more easily and completely worked than in Mk.

7. Some changes are made from a similar motive of reverence for the apostles.

8. Others in order to bring the narrative into agreement with Old Testament prophecy.

9. Some are explanatory, some are made for the sake of accuracy, and others are definite corrections of Mk.

In fact, we are dealing here with a secondary stage in the growth of the Gospel tradition, in which not only (perhaps not mainly) new evidence, but rather certain *a priori* considerations have begun to modify the original story. It is the effect of this editorial method upon the miraculous elements in the Gospel that we have now to consider.

[1] Similarly Mt. divides Jesus' discourses into five blocks (that being a conventional number in literary arrangement among the Jews). *v.* Streeter in *Studies*, p. 148.

(iii)

The first question is, why did St. Matthew omit some of the miracles in Mk. ? There are, as we have said, four instances in which this has happened.

1. *The man with an unclean spirit* (Mk. i. 21-28=Lk. iv. 31-37).

We are justified in arguing thus: Lk. has the incident; therefore it was in Mk. (There is not sufficient evidence that St. Matthew had one edition of Mk., St. Luke another; besides, Mt. agrees with Lk. as regards the passages that precede and follow the omission.) Moreover, St. Matthew has kept three fragments of the incident—the entry into Capernaum (Mk. i. 21=Mt. iv. 13b), the people's astonishment (Mk. i. 22, transferred to the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount=Mt. vii. 28-29), and the fame of the miracle (Mk. i. 28=Mt. iv. 24). That is, St. Matthew leaves out just the miracle, and does so deliberately.

He may have been influenced by his arrangement of miracles in groups of three, and, wishing to make room for the centurion's servant from Q, may have omitted the present incident. Again, the motive of reverence applies here. St. Mark admits that, after Jesus had told the spirit to be silent, it cried with a loud voice, and that it 'came out, *tearing*' the patient. St. Luke transfers the loud voice, putting it before the command of silence, and says that the spirit 'came out of him, *having done him no hurt.*' St. Matthew prefers to omit the incident altogether. (There is a close parallel to this in the case of the epileptic boy, Mk. ix. 14-29=Mt. xvii. 14-20=Lk. ix. 37-43.) It is indeed customary with him to omit cases of exorcism, upon which disproportionate stress seems to have been laid in the earliest Gospel (cp. Mk. i. 34, 39, iii. 11, with parallels).

We conclude that St. Matthew omitted this incident, not under the influence of any new evidence, but 'for reasons of his own,' which were partly editorial, and partly theological.

2. *The deaf stammerer* (Mk. vii. 31-36).

This incident is omitted both by St. Matthew and by St. Luke. But St. Matthew shows that he knew of it, because he keeps the introductory words (Mk. vii. 31=Mt. xv. 29), and substitutes for the particular miracle a general summary of works of healing (Mt. xv. 30). That is, the omission is deliberate.

Arrangement is no motive here; indeed, the summary (xv. 30) has to be inserted in order to balance the loss of the incident, and to fill up the group of three. But the theological motive is strongly present. There are three features in St. Mark's account which might have been thought unedifying—the privacy of the cure, the undignified and commonplace method used (including the notice that Jesus 'sighed'), and the disobedience of the people to the command of secrecy. These are probably the grounds for the omission of the incident.

3. *The blind man at Bethsaida* (Mk. viii. 22-26).

This is an almost exact parallel to the last case. It is true that we have no proof that St. Matthew had the story before him; but the possible reasons for omission are so similar, and so strong, that we need not doubt the fact. The privacy of the cure, the use of spittle, and the double imposition of hands (the first attempt being more or less a failure), would be intolerable to St. Matthew's point of view.

4. *Exorcism in Jesus' Name* (Mk. ix. 38-41=Lk. ix. 49-50).

The fact that St. Luke keeps this passage means that St. Matthew deliberately omits it (cp. 1 above). This is also shown by St. Matthew's retention of the first words of it in a different context (Mt. x. 42=Mk. ix. 41), where they are, nevertheless, connected with words that immediately precede the omitted incident (Mt. x. 40=Mk. ix. 37). There are two possible reasons for the omission, both theological. It might be thought derogatory to Jesus that one who was not a disciple should be repre-

sented as working the same cures as Jesus Himself; and undesirable, in a church that every day became more conscious of its unity, and more exclusive towards outsiders, to perpetuate this provocative saying, with its magnificent but (from a later point of view) impracticable charity.

The conclusion to be drawn from these instances is that St. Matthew felt himself justified, without any fresh evidence, but simply from a particular standpoint of theological and devotional development, to omit some incidents in the scanty records of the Lord's life which seemed to be unedifying. He thus encouraged *the tendency to set up ideas as to what Jesus ought to have done, and ought to have been, instead of the plain tradition as to what He did and was.* This conclusion has an important bearing upon St. Matthew's evidence as a whole.

(iv)

We have already said something as to the general way in which St. Matthew edited Mk. We have now to investigate the special case of miracles. It will be best first to illustrate the case with three selected instances—one from each class of miracle—and then to summarise the results of an examination of them all.

1. *The Transfiguration* (Mk. ix. 2-10=Mt. xvii. 1-9; Lk. ix. 28-36).—This may be taken as a typical vision-narrative. St. Matthew follows St. Mark's account fairly closely throughout, but differs from him in the following points:—(1) St. John is described as St. James's 'brother'—an explanatory note. (2) The actual transfiguration is more explicitly described—'His face did shine as the sun.' This should be taken with (3) the alteration of St. Mark's image for the whiteness of the garments ('so as no fuller on earth can whiten them') into the more dignified but commonplace 'white as the light'; the motive of the change is reverence. (4) The same motive changes 'Rabbi' into 'Lord,' and inserts, before St. Peter's sug-

gestion of the tabernacles, 'if Thou wilt.' (5) The cloud is not an ordinary cloud, but is 'bright,' and the repeated 'behold' calls attention to it and to the voice. (6) The words of the voice are rounded off into a complete quotation. (7) The supernaturalness of the voice is emphasised by the effect on the disciples: 'they fell on their face, and were sore afraid' (not at the vision, as in Mk., but at the voice). Then (8) 'Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid, and lifting up their eyes,' etc.: these are all developments of the story, not based on new evidence, but simply arising out of the desire to make explicit what in the original is rather obscure. (9) In the sequel the incident is clearly called a 'vision,' and the apostles' doubt as to the meaning of the 'rising again from the dead' is omitted.

2. As a typical work of healing we may take the case of the *Gerasene demoniac* (Mk. v. 1-20=Mt. viii. 28-34=Lk. viii. 26-39). Here (1) 'Gadarenes' instead of 'Gerasenes' is a conjectural improvement, the only known Gerasa being far from the lake. But even Gadara was several miles from the shore; so (2) Mk.'s 'straightway' is omitted, and the herd of swine at the lake-side is 'afar off from them.' (3) Having omitted Mk.'s story of the demoniac at Capernaum (Mk. i. 21-28; *v.* (iii) 1 above), St. Matthew now transforms Mk.'s 'man with an unclean spirit' into '*two* possessed with devils,' just as, after omitting Mk. viii. 22-26, he provides two blind men in Mt. xx. 30. (4) Mk.'s detailed description of the man is summarised as 'exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass by that way.' (5) St. Matthew omits much of Mk.'s story, partly for the sake of abbreviation, partly (as in the case of Jesus' question, 'What is thy name?') from motives of reverence. (6) 'Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?' introduces a special Jewish theory as to the punishment of evil spirits at the day of judgement. (7) Jesus' permission to the spirits to go out becomes a command. (8) The omission of the number of the swine (compensated by the insertion of 'the whole herd'), and of the description

of the man's state after the miracle, are due to the desire to abbreviate. (9) So to some extent is the omission of Jesus' conversation with the man; though this is also influenced by impatience with what (compared to the miracle) seemed to be a side issue of the story. It is quite clear throughout this passage that St. Matthew's omissions and alterations are not due to any new knowledge of the facts, but to extraneous considerations.

3. As an example of St. Matthew's treatment of the third class of miraculous narrative in Mk. we may take the *raising of Jairus's daughter* (Mk. v. 21-24, 35-43=Mt. ix. 18-19, 23-26=Lk. viii. 40-42, 49-56). This incident, like the last, is one in which St. Matthew's main desire is to abbreviate. Thus (1) Jairus's name is omitted, as being of insufficient interest, and (2) the alteration of Mk.'s 'my daughter is at the point of death' to 'my daughter is even now dead' is due to the omission of the later message from the ruler's house announcing the death; and yet Mt. keeps the request 'lay Thy hands upon her,' which is appropriate only to the healing of the sick. There is this further reason for this omission, that St. Matthew has transferred the early part of the incident from the crowd by the lake-side (Mk. v. 21) to a small gathering in a house (Mt. ix. 18): there is no multitude, and no crowding of Jesus (which St. Matthew thought irreverent). (3) Similarly Mt.'s notice that 'the disciples' followed Jesus and the ruler is made to serve for Mk.'s description both of the crowd that followed to the house, and of the three disciples who were present in the death-chamber. (4) The mention of 'flute-players' shows special knowledge of Jewish customs. (5) 'Give place' summarises a larger speech in Mk., and the omission of the words at the raising, and of the age of the child, is also for the sake of shortness. (6) Finally, the command to give the girl something to eat probably goes out as derogatory to the completeness of the miracle. Other points might be mentioned, but these are sufficient to show the way in which St. Matthew edits the narrative.

(v)

If all the miraculous narratives that St. Matthew takes over from Mk. be examined in this kind of way, it will be found that St. Matthew's editorial methods, so far as they affect the form of his evidence for the miraculous, and omitting purely literary modifications, may be summarised as follows :—

1. In the case of *visions* the chief motive for such alterations as St. Matthew introduces appears to be reverence. Thus the natural meaning of Jesus' action, in submitting Himself to John's ' baptism of repentance,' is avoided by the insertion of a passage in which Jesus hints (rather obscurely) at another motive (Mt. iii. 14-15). Instead of being ' driven forth ' into the desert before His Temptation, Jesus is ' led up ' (iv. 1). There are several alterations of a similar kind, as we have seen, in the story of the Transfiguration (*v.* (iv) 1 above).

2. The same motive accounts for many of the alterations in the stories of *works of healing*. (That the omission of some whole incidents is due to the same cause has already been shown ; *v.* (iii) above.) Thus Jesus had no need to be ' told ' of the sickness of Simon's mother-in-law ; He saw her Himself (viii. 14). He did not demean Himself to ' take her by the hand, and raise her up ' ; He simply ' touched her hand, and she arose ' (viii. 15). And, being raised, she ministered not to *them* (Mk.) but to *Him*. His compassion towards the leper is omitted (viii. 3), as also the emphasis of the command which follows (' strictly charged him '—ἐμβριμησάμενος, Mk. i. 43), and the man's subsequent disobedience. In the healing of the paralytic the whole setting of the scene is altered by the omission of the crowd. St. Matthew thinks it unbecoming that Jesus should be disturbed or inconvenienced (cp. the incident of Jairus's daughter above) ; and the scribes' objection, ' Who can forgive sins but one, even God ? ' goes out as irreverent. In another place (Mk. iii. 4-5=Mt. xii. 11-12)

a question asked by Jesus becomes a statement, and Mk.'s notice that 'He looked round about . . . with anger, being grieved,' is omitted. Of another long description of the crowded nature of the Galilean ministry (Mk. iii. 7-10) nothing is left save 'many followed Him, and He healed them all' (xii. 15); and the same motive of reverence has modified the whole incident of Jairus's daughter (ix. 18 f.), so that the presence of the crowd, and Jesus' repeated question, 'Who touched Me?' (Mk. v. 31), are quite omitted; and, if it were not for Mk., we should carry away an entirely wrong impression of the incident. Another mark of the crowded, busy nature of the ministry goes out in Mk. vi. 56; again in Mk. vii. 24. A peculiarly Jewish tone is imparted to this last incident (the Syrophœnician woman) by the insertion of Jesus' words, 'I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (xv. 24); and Jesus' appreciation of the woman's saying is placed on the ground of her faith rather than (as in Mk.) of her shrewdness. The case of the epileptic boy (xvii. 14 f.) is treated like those of the Gerasene demoniac and the woman with an issue of blood—Jesus' personal inquiries and His interest in the symptoms of the case being omitted, and only the bare fact of the cure being retained. In the healing of Bartimæus at Jericho the principal omission seems to be due to abbreviation (xx. 32=Mk. x. 49-50). It is curious to notice that this is one of the few passages in which, contrary to his general custom (and in spite of Mk.'s silence) St. Matthew says that Jesus was 'moved with compassion' (cp. ix. 36, xiv. 14, xv. 32).

In some cases the motive of reverence leads to a definite heightening or extension of the miraculous element in the original story. This may affect either the nature of the case that is cured, or the method of treatment, or the result. (1) Under the first head comes St. Matthew's editorial 'commonplace' (Mt. iv. 23, ix. 35; cp. x. i.): 'healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people'; the doubling of the Gerasene demoniac (viii. 28)

and the blind men at Jericho (xx. 30, though there is another motive at work here; *v.* (iv) 2 above); the commission to the apostles to 'raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils' (x. 8); the description of the Syrophœnician woman's daughter as 'grievously vexed' with a devil (xv. 22); and of the epileptic boy in similar terms (xvii. 15). (2) As regards the method of treatment, St. Peter's wife's mother is raised by a mere touch (viii. 15); spirits are cast out by a word (viii. 16); a single command (not repeated, as in Mk.) is enough to exorcise the Gadarene demoniac (viii. 32); Jairus's daughter is raised by touch, without a word (ix. 25); and the epileptic boy is cured by a single rebuke addressed to the spirit possessing him (xvii. 18, in complete contrast to Mk.'s story). (3) Thirdly, as regards the results of the cures, where Mk. says that Jesus healed 'many' cases, Mt. says that He healed 'all' (viii. 16, xii. 15; cp. xiv. 35); and whereas Mk. says of the visit to Nazareth that 'He could there do no mighty work,' St. Matthew alters this to 'He did not many mighty works there' (Mk. mentions a few exceptions, but they are not 'mighty works,' Mk. vi. 5=Mt. xiii. 58). Similarly, cures that might be thought incomplete in Mk. are made complete in Mt.: the withered hand is restored 'whole as the other' (xii. 13); the woman with the issue of blood was 'made whole from that hour' (ix. 22, where Mk. leaves open the possibility of a gradual cure). Jairus's daughter does not need food to complete her recovery (ix. 26), nor is any doubt left as to the thorough cure of the Syrophœnician woman's daughter (xv. 28), or of the dumb, maimed, lame, and blind in xv. 31. So, too, the epileptic boy's cure is sudden and complete (xvii. 18).

3. There remain the '*wonders*.' Here, too, there is the same tendency to intensify the miraculous elements, and to modify anything that might seem to be irreverent. In the incident of the stilling of the storm, Jesus' suggestion that the disciples shall cross the lake becomes a command, and instead of their taking Him with them, He leads and they

follow (viii. 18, 23); the complaint, 'Carest Thou not that we perish?' gives place to the more reverent 'Save, Lord' (viii. 25); the words spoken to the sea are omitted as undignified; and the rebuke addressed to the apostles is modified (viii. 26). In the feeding of the five thousand the introductory reference to the crowded nature of the ministry goes out (Mk. vi. 31; cp. 2 above); so does Jesus' questioning of the disciples with regard to their provisions (xiv. 17); otherwise there are no alterations except such as are due to abbreviation. The walking on the lake provides more serious changes. The important detail, 'He would have passed by them,' is omitted (Mk. vi. 48), and a new and uncompromisingly miraculous incident is added—St. Peter's attempt to walk on the water (xiv. 28-31); moreover, the narrative ends not (as in Mk.) with the incredulity of the disciples, but with their acknowledgment, 'Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.' In the feeding of the four thousand, on the other hand, St. Matthew follows Mk. so closely that he does not even omit Jesus' questioning with the disciples—one of the signs that this narrative is probably a derivative form of the feeding of the five thousand. In the incident of the fig-tree all mention of Jesus' uncertainty whether there would be figs on the tree is omitted. More remarkably still, St. Matthew, in compressing the incident, says that the tree '*immediately* withered away' (xxi. 19; in Mk. no change is noticed until the next morning): the other alterations in the passage are corollaries of this heightening of the miracle. Finally, the rending of the Temple veil (xxvii. 51) is connected with an earthquake, which also opens many graves, so that bodies of Old Testament heroes are raised, and appear in Jerusalem; and it is this earthquake, and not the manner of Jesus' death—the material, not the spiritual marvel—that prompts the centurion's confession of faith, 'Truly this was the Son of God' (xxvii. 54).

The cumulative effect of this evidence is very strong.

On the one hand, it shows that St. Matthew's many and serious variations from Mk., in his descriptions of Jesus' miracles, are generally well accounted for on *a priori* grounds, and do not imply that he possessed any new evidence. And on the other hand, it shows how soon considerations of reverence, and the tendency to heighten the supernatural elements in the Gospel, began (however unconsciously) to modify the evangelist's witness to the facts. There are two inferences to be drawn here. *First, the only evidence for the great bulk of the miracles is St. Mark's. And secondly, it is doubtful whether any of the evidence is quite free from a tendency to exaggerate the miraculous element.*

This tendency was natural, but disastrous; in place of the rich reality of the facts it set up a one-sided theory. In the name of reverence it disparaged the soul of reverence, which is truth.

(vi)

The last group of miraculous stories which we have to consider here is that which is peculiar to St. Matthew's Gospel. We are here working at a disadvantage. The narratives are known to us in only one form. We have no Marcan original with which to compare them. We must judge them primarily on their own merits.

But a certain presumption arises from our study of St. Matthew's editorial methods. We know now what was his attitude towards the supernatural. We know that he did not simply accept St. Mark's stories as part of the evangelical tradition, and reproduce them without substantial alteration or comment. We have discovered that he altered and elaborated them with an eye to orthodoxy and edification. It is only reasonable, then, to suppose that a similar process of editing has been applied to the miraculous stories which are peculiar to the Gospel. The original forms of these stories have been lost. But there *were* original forms. And, if we claim liberty to criticise some of the details of the existing narratives, we are only

extending a proved method of investigation to another part of its proper field.

We may first put on one side four summaries of miracles which are of inferior importance. Mt. iv. 23 (=Mk. i. 39) substitutes for Mk.'s exacter description, 'casting out devils,' a general formula, 'healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.' The same formula recurs in Mt. x. 1=Mk. iii. 15, and in Mt. ix. 35=Mk. vi. 6. In place of the healing of the deaf stammerer (Mk. vii. 32) St. Matthew puts a general summary of miracles (xv. 30). These, it is clear, are not genuine summaries based on fresh evidence, but bits of literary joinery, designed to round off the narrative. The repetition of a formula is quite characteristic of St. Matthew's method. In one case at least the result is a distinct loss of truthfulness.

Further, of the eight cases that remain, two are of little importance. The dream of Pilate's wife (xxvii. 19) has nothing miraculous about it. The notice, just before the feeding of the five thousand, that Jesus 'healed their sick' (xiv. 14), is an editorial commonplace.

There remain six cases that must be considered in detail.

1. The first, and perhaps the most startling, is the story of *St. Peter's attempt to walk on water* (Mt. xiv. 28-31). This St. Matthew inserts into Mk.'s narrative of Jesus' walking on water (Mk. vi. 45-52), which in other respects he reproduces almost exactly. The insertion is not demanded by anything in the original story. There is no sign of its omission in Mk. On the contrary, Mk.'s '*He* went up into the boat' has to be changed into '*they*' to accommodate the intruding section. Further, if the incident happened, it must have been known to St. Peter and the other apostles; and it follows either that Mk.'s story does not (as we have hitherto been supposing) rest on apostolic authority, or that Mt.'s addition to it was omitted from the apostolic tradition. But no adequate reason for this silence has ever been alleged. Either, then, doubt is thrown upon Mk.'s source by the absence of the incident, or upon

Mt.'s by the presence of it; and the presumption (so far as our experience goes) is in favour of Mk. rather than Mt. Moreover, the story has an evidential as well as a symbolical motive (cp. p. 48). It is meant to put the miraculousness of Jesus' achievement beyond doubt. St. Peter offers, and Jesus accepts, a practical test. St. Peter literally walks for a short distance on the surface of a stormy sea, and then begins to sink. Jesus, whose supernatural power enables Him not to sink, saves St. Peter, and points the lesson of the incident in the words, 'Wherefore didst thou doubt?' Even supposing that the kernel of the story were original, the husk of it would probably belong to a later date.

Here it is important to notice that the material peculiar to Mt. includes a group of traditions about St. Peter. Besides the present incident, we have the declaration 'Thou art Peter' (xvi. 17-19), the story of the coin in the fish's mouth (xvii. 24-27), and St. Peter's question about forgiveness (xviii. 21). St. Matthew also calls St. Peter πρῶτος in his list of the apostles (x. 2), and makes him their spokesman (xv. 15). The Petrine cycle of stories covers a wide field, both in the Gospels and in the Acts. Some parts of it may be of early origin, and rest on genuine tradition. Other parts are probably of slight value. The complete omission of the present incident from Mk. goes strongly against its authenticity in its present form and place; and the more credence we give to the tradition of St. Mark's connection with St. Peter, the more significant does this silence become.

But it is not a pure invention. There is an illuminating parallel to the story in Jn. xxi. 7, where St. Peter throws himself into the water in order to go to Jesus. Probably Jn. is here nearer to the original facts. If his narrative is to be identified with Lk.'s draught of fish (v. 1 f.), both may be developments of an original incident, the exact form of which we cannot now recover.

The proper source of St. Peter's pre-eminence as an

apostle, and the real centre of the traditions that gathered round his name, was the appearance of the risen Christ to him in Galilee (1 Cor. xv. 5)—an appearance foreshadowed by Mk. xiv. 29-31, 66-72, xvi. 7, and doubtless described in the lost ending of the earliest Gospel. It is this appearance which probably underlies both Lk. v. and Jn. xxi. (cp. p. 89).

Indeed, even the story of the Transfiguration is connected with the period that followed the Resurrection (Mk. ix. 9), and described in language that St. Paul applies to the Resurrection life (μετεμορφώθη, Mk. ix. 2 ; cp. 2 Cor. iii. 18) ; so that we are hardly surprised when the *Revelation of Peter* definitely places it after the Resurrection.[1]

However this may be, it seems likely that St. Peter's confident undertaking to walk on the sea, the failure of his faith, his rescue by Jesus, and his return to stablish the belief of his brethren that Jesus is ' of a truth the Son of God,' are a symbolical representation of St. Peter's readiness to go with Jesus ' both to prison and to death,' of his subsequent denial, of his restoration and commission by the risen Christ, and of the confirmation of the early Church in the faith of the Resurrection.[2] If such be the symbolism of the story, we shall attach less importance to it in its present form, as evidence for a fact of history.

2. *The healing of two blind men* (ix. 27-31).—It was necessary for St. Matthew's scheme of arrangement (*v.* p. 60) that he should provide a miracle in this position. And just as in viii. 28 he describes the Gerasene demoniac as ' *two* possessed with devils ' in place of Mk.'s two separate cures of unclean spirits (Mk. i. 23), so here, having omitted two cases of healing (Mk. vii. 32, viii. 22), he inserts, as a single incident, the healing of *two* blind men. The story may be a variant of that of the blind man at Jericho (Mk. x. 46-52=Mt. xx. 29-34 ; here also one man becomes two), or it may be a *cento* from various sources.

[1] *v.* Bacon, *The Founding of the Church*, p. 48.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 49.

In either case assimilation has probably taken place, and accounts for some of the more Marcan features, *e.g.* 'Son of David'; 'the house' (*i.e.* St. Peter's house at Capernaum ?); the insistence on faith; the touching of the eyes; the attempt to secure silence; and the man's disobedience. In fact, it seems unlikely that the story rests upon any new evidence; but, however this may be, it falls into the ordinary classification of cures in Mk.

3. *The coin in the fish's mouth* (Mt. xvii. 24-27).—This incident is substituted by St. Matthew for Mk. ix. 33-34, with its unedifying reference to a dispute among the disciples. It seems probable, from the important part assigned to St. Peter, that the story comes from the same collection as that of the walking on the lake (1 above). That it is a late addition to that cycle of tradition might also follow from the fact that it seems to attribute a supernatural foreknowledge to Jesus ('Jesus spake first to him'); as also from the obvious ecclesiastical interest which underlies it—the relation of Jewish Christians in Palestine to the Jewish authorities.[1] Though there is no sign in the narrative that it is meant to be taken metaphorically, or that St. Peter was meant to sell the fish, and pay the tax with the proceeds, yet something of the kind may possibly have been the original form of the story. No miracle is actually described or stated, though the story in its present form is apparently meant to imply one.

This is a case in which we have not enough material from which to reconstruct the original incident. But if we had, and were able to do so, we should probably find that here too a natural event has been transformed into a miracle.

4. and 5. *The earthquake and appearances* at the time of Jesus' death (xxvii. 51-53) represent an addition to the

[1] *v.* Allen, *St. Matthew*, p. 191. The personal interest which the early Christians took in the stories and parables of the Gospel is the greatest obstacle to the discovery of their original meaning. Cp. p. 51.

three hours' darkness and the rending of the veil which appear in the original tradition. The story is clearly of local origin. Jerusalem, as in Mt. iv. 5, is described as the 'holy city,' and the Old Testament heroes are called 'the saints.' The facts—it is admitted—were not known at the time. It was not till 'after His resurrection' (the 'His' shows how detached the story is) that the appearances were reported; and the earthquake (of which St. Matthew makes further use in xxviii. 2) was perhaps suggested by the tradition of the darkness. There may have been an earthquake, there may have been visions, and neither need be miraculous. But the evidence is very slight. And the silence of St. Mark, who was probably living in Jerusalem at the time, and heard the gossip of the Christians, shows that the story was of late origin.

6. The last case is that of the *earthquake and descent of an angel* on Easter morning (xxviii. 2). This is doubtless part of the same Jerusalem tradition as the last story, and rests on no better evidence. But the consideration of it may be postponed till we come to treat the Resurrection narratives as a whole.

(vii)

We have divided the miraculous narratives in St. Matthew's Gospel into three classes. We have found that the great majority of them are taken over from Mk. But their repetition adds nothing to their authenticity. The alterations that St. Matthew makes in them are not based on any new evidence. Some stories he omits as unedifying; others he modifies from the theological standpoint of his time. He is concerned not merely with the facts, but also with their interpretation.

The same process of editing could probably be demonstrated in the case of Q, if it were possible at all adequately to compare St. Matthew's version with the original, as can be done in the case of Mk. But in any case Q is practically non-miraculous.

Outside these two main authorities, St. Matthew appears to have drawn most of his miraculous narratives from two sources—a collection of Petrine stories not known to St. Peter, and a cycle of Jerusalem traditions not current in the Jerusalem of St. Mark.

We conclude that what is new in this Gospel (so far as miracles are concerned) is generally less trustworthy than what is old, and that what is old is less trustworthy here than in its original form in Mk. The crux of the question is still the evidence of St. Mark.

CHAPTER VI

THE EVIDENCE OF ST. LUKE

(i) *The Gospel*

(i)

It may be thought that in passing from St. Matthew to St. Luke we are entering upon a new stage of Gospel tradition. Here is a book which claims to have been written, not by a Jew, but by a Gentile, not by a friend of St. Peter and the old apostles, but by a companion of St. Paul, not by an untrained compiler, but by an educated historian.

The preface to the Gospel opens up a new world of expression. It announces a new author, and a new method. It promises a thoroughness and accuracy never achieved before. The eye-witness of the apostles, it tells us, and the continuous oral tradition derived from them, has passed away. Many attempts have been made to draw up written gospels, but by men who were not eye-witnesses, and with unsuccessful results. Consequently there is need for a fresh attempt, on more thorough lines; the new gospel must trace everything from its source (*παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν*), with accuracy (*ἀκριβῶς*), and in order (*καθεξῆς*).

The first of these promises is to some extent carried out by the provision of the birth-narratives of the Baptist and of Jesus Himself. The third (*καθεξῆς* is a favourite word with St. Luke) is partly justified by St. Luke's greater faithfulness to the order of events in Mk., compared with St. Matthew—though, on the other hand, the travel-narrative (ix. 51-xix. 28) is probably quite unchronological. The second

promise (ἀκριβῶς) suggests that some attempt has been made to sift out trustworthy from untrustworthy traditions.

In face of these claims it is a sad disappointment to find (1) that for the whole framework of our Lord's life, including the great bulk of the works of healing, and (what is more important) the stages in the development of His mission (inwardly, His consciousness of Messiahship; outwardly, His relations with the disciples and the people) St. Luke is still almost entirely dependent on St. Mark. (2) That for the teaching of Jesus his main authority, other than Mk., is the same as St. Matthew's, viz. Q or its equivalents. (3) And that, though there is certainly a larger amount of new material in this Gospel than in Mt.,[1] there is little or no attempt to criticise it, to trace its sources, or to estimate its value.

The promise of the preface is unfulfilled. This is, after all, another gospel of the old type. We cannot take it on its own valuation. We must examine St. Luke's evidence as cautiously as that of St. Matthew.

(ii)

St. Luke's methods of editing Mk. are very similar to those of St. Matthew (cp. p. 60).

1. Although the number of passages that he omits is considerably greater than in the case of St. Matthew, yet he retains the bulk of the Marcan narrative, and reproduces it in substantially the same order. Omitting those parts of the Gospel which do not fall within the Marcan framework, we get the following results[2]:—

Passages.	Part I. Galilean Ministry.	Part II. Travel-narrative.	Part III. The last week.
Common to all three Gospels, .	20	9	21
„ „ Lk. and Mt., . .	3	7	0
„ „ Lk. and Mk., . .	2	0	1
Peculiar to Lk., . . .	6	31	8
Total, . .	31	47	30

[1] Notably in the new source or sources underlying Lk. ix. 51-xviii. 14 (*v.* Hawkins in *Studies*, p. 31 f.), and perhaps also Lk.'s Passion-narrative (*ibid.* p. 76 f.).

[2] *v.* Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. xxxviii.

Two things are obvious here—first, that Mk. supplies a large proportion of the subject-matter for the Galilean ministry, and the last week in Jerusalem; and secondly, that the travel-narrative, which plays such a small part in Mk., is used as a framework for the great bulk of the new material collected by St. Luke. In other words, St. Luke's researches have provided him with much new material, but with no new chronology. The voice is Jacob's voice, though the hands are the hands of Esau.

2. The list of omissions from Mk. is a long one. One large group of them raises a difficult problem, which will be discussed shortly. Others are doubtless due to causes similar to those in Mt. The story of Gethsemane is toned down from feelings of reverence. The request of St. James and St. John is omitted as derogatory to the disciples. But St. Luke is less sensitive in this respect than St. Matthew. He keeps the cure of the unclean spirit at Capernaum (iv. 31-37), and the incident of the miracle-worker who was not a disciple (ix. 49-50). Other omissions are due to abbreviation; but the stories of the Gerasene demoniac (viii. 26-39) and Jairus's daughter (viii. 40-56) are given in much greater detail than by St. Matthew. Others, again, are due to substitution: the draught of fish (v. 1-11) replacing the call of St. Peter, the parable of the fig-tree (xiii. 6-9) the withering of the fig-tree (*v.* p. 83), and the woman who was a sinner (vii. 36-50) the anointing at Bethany.

3. Many alterations are made for stylistic and similar reasons.

As in the case of Mt., so here, we are dealing with a secondary stratum of Gospel tradition. It becomes important, therefore, to see in what way St. Luke's editorial methods affect his evidence for miracles.

(iii)

Let us deal first with those miracles which St. Luke has omitted in his editing of Mk. Those which St. Matthew also omits are :—

Mk. vii. 32-36. The deaf stammerer.
Mk. viii. 22-26. The blind man at Bethsaida.

Those which St. Luke alone omits are :—

The walking on the lake (Mk. vi. 45-52=Mt. xiv. 22-33).
Healing at Gennesaret (Mk. vi. 53-56=Mt. xiv. 34-36).
The Syrophœnician woman (Mk. vii. 24-30=Mt. xv. 21-28).
The feeding of the four thousand (Mk. viii. 1-10= Mt. xv. 32-39).
The withering of the fig-tree (Mk. xi. 12-14, 20-23= Mt. xxi. 18-21).

Now the remarkable fact about these omissions is that, with one exception (the withering of the fig-tree) they all belong to a single section of Mk. (vi. 45-viii. 26), which is omitted as a whole, the non-miraculous parts of it as well as the miraculous. This is the more significant when we consider what a large proportion of St. Luke's total omissions fall within this group, and how careful he has been to retain the order and even the detailed contents of St. Mark's miracle-stories outside these sections.

This ' great omission,' as it is generally called, has caused much concern to the critics, who have propounded various theories in explanation of it. Seeing that up to the point where the gap occurs (Mk. vi. 45) St. Luke follows Mk.'s order very closely, and reproduces most of his material (the few small omissions are easily accounted for), and that, after Mk. viii. 26 (the end of the gap) the same policy is resumed, we are naturally surprised at the complete omission (except for one incident which reappears in a different

context, Mk. viii. 11-12, 15=Lk. xi. 16, 29, xii. 1) of a block of seventy-four verses in St. Luke's principal source. Three explanations have been suggested.

1. The omitted verses may not have been in St. Luke's edition of Mk.—they may, in fact, belong to a 'deutero-Mark.' If this were so, we should expect to find some difference in style between the 'proto'- and 'deutero'-passages, as we do, for instance, between the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts. But this is not the case. Indeed, the omitted verses, which form about one-ninth part of Mk., have their full proportion of the Marcan characteristics present in the other eight-ninths of the Gospel. It is, of course, just possible that this section might accidentally have dropped out of St. Luke's copy of Mk., though it is unlikely, seeing that it would be in the middle of the roll; or even that St. Mark might have inserted it into his Gospel between the time of St. Luke's use of it, and St. Matthew's. But probably the right inference is that the omitted verses were present in St. Luke's source.

2. If so, St. Luke may have omitted the section deliberately. Good reasons can be given for such omission in the case of several of the narratives in question. The 'primitive' stories of the deaf stammerer (Mk. vii. 32) and the blind man of Bethsaida (Mk. viii. 22) might have been omitted, in any case, for the reasons for which St. Matthew found them unedifying (*v.* p. 63). St. Luke may have anticipated modern critics in regarding the Feeding of the Four Thousand (Mk. viii. 1) as a doublet of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Even the omission of the story of the Syrophœnician woman (Mk. vii. 24)—the single cure in Mk. which is performed for a Gentile, and therefore the last that we should expect St. Luke to reject—might be explained by the anti-Gentile feeling which underlies the incident: the fact that the 'crumbs' are given to the 'dogs' hints only too plainly that the 'meat' is for the 'children' alone. But, even if we could give good reasons for the omission of each of the seventy-four verses separ-

ately, that would not explain how they came to be omitted *en bloc*. The coincidence would really be too extraordinary.

3. It is, therefore, preferable to think that the omission was accidental. And it is certainly remarkable that the omitted section begins and ends not only with two references to 'basketfuls of broken pieces' which were taken up after miracles of feeding (Mk. vi. 43, viii. 19-20), but also with two mentions of the village Bethsaida (Mk. vi. 45, viii. 22), which is not named elsewhere in Mk. It is quite conceivable that the copyist passed accidentally from one passage to the other, and omitted all that fell between. Even if, afterwards, he discovered his error, he may not have found anything in the omitted sections worth restoration.[1]

The 'great omission' being thus accounted for, we cannot argue, from his silence in these cases, that St. Luke took up a critical attitude towards Mk.'s miracles. The only omission of a miraculous story that falls outside the seventy-four verses—that of the withering of the fig-tree—is made good by the substitution of the parable of the fig-tree (xiii. 6-9). Here St. Luke may indeed have thought (rightly, according to some modern critics) that the incident was a materialisation of this or a similar parable (*v.* p. 49).

(iv)

Following the plan adopted in the case of Mt., we will deal with St. Luke's editing of Mk., first, by giving one example of his method under each class of miraculous stories, and then by summing up the results of an examination of them all. For our three examples we may take the same incidents as before (p. 64).

1. *The Transfiguration* (Mk. ix. 2-10=Mt. xvii. 1-9=

[1] Cp. throughout, Hawkins in *Studies*, p. 61 f.; cp. Streeter, *ibid.* p. 223; for a different theory, Williams, *ibid.* p. 418. An exactly similar instance of accidental omission due to the copyist's eye passing from an earlier to a later use of the same words can be seen in Abbott, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, vol. ii. p. 160.

Lk. ix. 28-36).—The stylistic alterations in this passage are considerable, *e.g.* particularly the substantival use of the infinitive (*ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι . . . ἐν τῷ διαχωρίζεσθαι*, etc.), and the words 'men' (*ἄνδρες*) and 'Master' (*Ἐπιστάτα*). As at the time of the Baptism (iii. 21), so now, St. Luke suggests that the vision occurred while Jesus was praying (vv. 28-29). Writing as a Gentile, he avoids the word 'transfigured' (*μετεμορφώθη*) with its pagan, mythological associations, and substitutes 'the fashion of his countenance was altered.' St. Mark's homely comparison for the whiteness of the clothes is omitted, and they are described as 'flashing like lightning' (*ἐξαστράπτων*, a word not used elsewhere in the New Testament). At this point some new matter is introduced. The nature of the vision and the subject of Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah are left uncertain in Mk. So St. Luke tells us that the prophets 'appeared in glory (*δόξῃ*, the Shekinah [1]), and spake of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.' The reality of the vision is further emphasised by the notice that, although the disciples had been 'heavy with sleep,' they became fully awake before they 'saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him.' (Or it perhaps means that in spite of their sleepiness they remained awake throughout the time of the vision.) St. Peter's proposal to 'make tabernacles,' the reason for which is not explained in Mt., is represented as an attempt to prevent the departure of Moses and Elijah ('as they were parting from Him'). The disciples' fear is attributed not to the vision, as in Mk., but to the overshadowing cloud from which the supernatural voice proceeds. Jesus' charge of secrecy is omitted. The editorial variations here do not seem to be based on fresh evidence, but to be due to the desire to explain what is obscure in the original account, to put the reality of the vision beyond doubt, and to edify the reader.

[1] Is it a coincidence that St. Paul writes *μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν* in 2 Cor. iii. 18? Cp. p. 74.

2. *The Gerasene demoniac* (Mk. v. 1-20=Mt. viii. 28-34 =Lk. viii. 26-39).—This is a case in which St. Luke has preserved Mk. much more fully than St. Matthew. But there are considerable alterations. The description of the patient is largely re-written. The man 'for a long time had worn no clothes,' and 'was driven of the devil into the deserts.' The former detail is an inference from Mk. v. 15: the latter is meant to explain how the sudden attacks of frenzy made all attempts to restrain the man useless. Jesus' power is brought out by several small touches. The patient 'falls down before' Him; He 'commands' the spirit to come out; the man, when cured, sits 'at the feet of Jesus'; and the people are 'holden with a great fear.' The alteration of Mk.'s 'out of the country' into 'into the abyss' gives effect to a theory that the evil spirit is quite distinct from the personality of the patient, and knows that its proper dwelling-place is in Hades. Two small variations—'come forth upon the land' and 'lake' (for Mk.'s 'sea')—show St. Luke's technical knowledge. There is no clear evidence here that St. Luke had new information. The alterations seem to be simply editorial.

3. *Jairus's daughter* (Mk. v. 21-24, 35-43=Mt. ix. 18-19, 23-26=Lk. viii. 40-42, 49-56).—Here again St. Luke follows Mk. into considerable detail, but edits his source with some freedom. The girl becomes an 'only daughter' (cp. the widow's son at Nain, vii. 12, and the demoniac boy, ix. 38). The completeness of the miracle is emphasised by 'she shall be made whole,' 'knowing that she was dead,' and 'her spirit returned.' In these few alterations (others of less note might be added) the tendency to put the miraculousness of the incident beyond doubt is clearly present. As in ix. 28 and Acts i. 13, St. John is put before St. James in the list of the three apostles, as though the Gospel belonged to an age or place that had reversed the ordinary order. Neither here nor elsewhere is there any clear sign of the use of new evidence.

(v)

An examination of all the miraculous stories corroborates the conclusion that is suggested by these three instances.

(1) Alterations are made in order to explain Mk.'s account, and to put the miraculousness of such incidents beyond doubt. The 'spirit' at the Baptism (Mk. i. 10) is identified as 'the Holy Ghost,' and descends 'in a bodily form (*σωματικῷ εἴδει*) as a dove' (iii. 22). The darkness at the Crucifixion (Mk. xv. 33) is due to 'the sun's light failing' (xxiii. 45, probably meaning a miraculous event, not an eclipse). The discovery of the 'young man . . . in a white robe' in the tomb (Mk. xvi. 5) becomes a sudden appearance of 'two men in dazzling apparel' (xxiv. 4).

(2) Features of the original story that might seem to limit Jesus' power are modified or removed. The unclean spirit of Capernaum, instead of 'tearing' its victim (Mk. i. 26) when it had 'thrown him down in the midst,' 'came out of him, having done him no hurt' (iv. 35). Simon's mother-in-law was 'holden with a great fever' (Mk. i. 30 says 'lay sick of a fever'), yet it was enough for Jesus to stand over her and rebuke the fever, and 'immediately' she rose up (iv. 38-39). The boy with a dumb spirit has a renewed seizure, as in Mk., not, however, at sight of Jesus (Mk. ix. 20), but before he is brought to Him (ix. 42). When he is brought, there is no delay: Jesus 'healed the boy and gave him back to his father' (contrast the dialogue and details in Mk.).

(3) The miraculousness of the incidents is sometimes heightened. When Mk. reports that Jesus 'healed many' (Mk. i. 34), St. Luke says that 'He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them' (iv. 40). The 'great fever' (iv. 38 above) and the man 'full of leprosy' (v. 12) have the same force. Other alterations heighten the significance or dramatic quality of the situation. The withered hand was the 'right hand' (vi. 6); the high priest's servant lost his 'right ear' (xxii. 50); Jairus's daughter is his 'only

daughter' (viii. 42); the boy with a dumb spirit an 'only child' (ix. 38); and the boy at Nain 'the only son of his mother, and she was a widow' (vii. 12). Finally, it is in keeping with this point of view that the miracles should be rounded off with such conclusions as 'they were all astonished at the majesty of God' (ix. 43), or 'all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God' (xviii. 43).

We must not exaggerate this evidence. There are miraculous stories, such as the Storm on the Lake (Mk. iv. 35-41=Lk. viii. 22-25) or the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mk. vi. 30-44=Lk. ix. 10-17), which St. Luke takes over from Mk. almost without alteration. There are some alterations in others which *may* be due to new sources of information. But this does not in the least go against the conclusion, established as it is by so great a number of instances, that *St. Luke's editing of the miracle-stories which he takes over from Mk. is generally due not to any new evidence, but to motives which show him to be a less trustworthy witness to the original facts of the Gospel narrative.*

We are thus thrown back again from this group of incidents, as we were in the case of Mt., upon the evidence of St. Mark.

(vi)

There remain the miracles peculiar to St. Luke.

1. The only one of these that comes under the head of visions is the *appearance of an angel* at Gethsemane (xxii. 43-44), which is interpolated into an account otherwise summarised from Mk. As is well known, however, these two verses are not found in the best MSS.,[1] and, though possibly incorporating a scrap of early tradition, may be regarded as a Western insertion.

2. Lk. viii. 2 refers to 'Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom *seven devils* had gone out' (as well as several other women who 'had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities'). The same tradition reappears in the spurious

[1] *v.* evidence in Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 544.

verses at the end of Mk. (xvi. 9). Were this cure described, it would doubtless fall into the ordinary class of exorcism.

3. *A woman with a spirit of infirmity* (xiii. 10-17).—The woman is described as having a '*spirit* of infirmity.' But a case of paralysis (as this would seem to be) has none of the symptoms of 'possession'; nor is there any other case in the Gospels where Jesus is represented as treating one 'possessed' by the laying on of hands. Probably St. Luke has wrongly inferred from Jesus' words in xiii. 16, that it was a case of possession. Otherwise we must suppose that the cure is done partly by word (xiii. 12) and partly by touch, as in the case of the demoniac boy in Mk. ix. 25-27. But this is unlikely; for St. Luke omitted the latter feature in Mk.'s story, thinking it derogatory to Jesus' power. St. Luke is in any case prone to personify the power of evil (cp. x. 18, xxii. 3, 31).

It may be questioned whether this story rests upon any independent tradition. From its mention of the teaching in the synagogue, and the Sabbath controversy, we should say that it ought to belong to an earlier period in the ministry. When we notice, further, the similarity of the saying in Lk. xiii. 15 to that in Mt. xii. 11, it becomes quite likely that the present incident is closely connected with that of the man with the withered hand (Lk. vi. 6-11= Mk. iii. 1-6=Mt. xii. 9-14).

4. *A man with dropsy* (xiv. 1-6).—This story of faith-healing evidently belongs to the same group of traditions as the last. The controversy is the same. The same λόγιον is repeated. The circumstances are so similar to those of Lk. vi. 6-11, that this passage may very likely be a doublet of that. The misplacement, at any rate, is obvious. Jesus would hardly be represented as dining again at a Pharisee's house after the denunciation in Lk. xi. 37 f.

5. *The healing of ten lepers* (xvii. 11-19).—St. Luke places this incident in the journey to Jerusalem; but the order of the words 'Samaria and Galilee' shows that there is no

clear tradition underlying the identification.[1] There is some difficulty in the account of the cure. The command given to the lepers to show themselves to the priests is a direct appeal to faith, like that made in the case of the paralytic who is told to take up his bed and walk (Mk. ii. 11), or of the man whose withered hand is restored in the act of stretching it out (Mk. iii. 5). Jesus says explicitly, 'thy faith hath made thee whole' (xvii. 19). But the fact that the men (in accordance with the law) remained at a distance shows that there was no means of telling whether or not they were healed; and the cure of the nine 'as they went' is only inferred from the claim of the one, that he found himself cleansed before he reached the priest. The interest of the incident to St. Luke lay in the tradition that this man was a Samaritan; he became, like the centurion (vii. 9), a type of Gentile piety. As to the source of the story, we might suppose that the nine are introduced to bring out the faith of the tenth, who might then be identified with the leper of Mk. i. 40=Lk. v. 12. But St. Luke's interest in Samaria is not confined to this passage (cp. ix. 52, x. 33; Acts viii.), and it seems more probable that this tradition is one of a number that he derived from Philip the deacon, the first evangelist of Samaria, when he stayed with him at Cæsarea (Acts xxi. 8). It would be part of the local tradition of the church of Cæsarea, of popular origin and uncertain authority.

6. *The draught of fish* (v. 1-11).—This is one of the two incidents (the other being the cure of St. Peter's mother-in-law) which (altering Mk.'s order) St. Luke prefixes to the call of the first apostles, in order to explain why they followed Jesus. It seems likely that he is indebted to Mk. for the outline of the story. But he edits it in characteristic fashion: he knows that the 'sea' is really a 'lake,'

[1] Burkitt, *The Gospel History*, pp. 96-97, thinks that Lk. meant a journey through Samaria; Plummer, p. 403, takes this passage as meaning a route along the southern frontier of Galilee, so as to cross into Peræa—the ordinary road followed by pilgrims. Cp. Streeter in *Studies*, p. 159.

and that the fishing takes place by night, the washing of the nets by day. And he combines it with a quite new element—a story of a miraculous draught of fish. This must be closely related to the narrative which appears in Jn. xxi. The similarity is not merely general, but extends to such details as the names of the disciples present, the time of the occurrence, the mention of the nets, and the behaviour of St. Peter. It seems to be most probable that St. Luke and the author of the fourth Gospel have differently edited the same tradition of a miraculous draught, the one making psychological use of it to explain St. Peter's first call, the other theological use of it to explain his final commission. Perhaps the original story was the lost ending of Mk., describing the first appearance of Jesus to St. Peter after the Resurrection. Thus Lk. keeps the words 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,' which are particularly appropriate after St. Peter's denial, but not otherwise. There is also some connection between this story and that of St. Peter walking on the lake in Mt. xiv. 28-31 (*v.* p. 72). Otherwise there is no evidence, except the presumption afforded by its relatively late introduction into the Gospel tradition, as to the source or authority of the story. In any case it is easy to understand how a fortunate and unexpected catch of fish might be attributed to a miracle. If the event happened as described, it was probably a natural one.

7. *The escape from the crowd at Nazareth* (iv. 28-30).—St. Luke is drawing on some new authority for the whole of his account of Jesus' preaching at Nazareth. The features of this authority seem to be (1) knowledge of the synagogue and its customs; (2) acquaintance with the topography of Nazareth; (3) an early theory of miracles—that they depend on the faith of the patient; (4) attribution to Jesus of a supernatural power of conveying Himself away. The appropriateness of the story to Gentile needs is probably due as much to editing as to the original tradition. It was, doubtless, introduced partly

for this reason, and partly to illustrate Jesus' supernatural power. The story is probably derived from local tradition, picked up on the spot either by St. Luke himself or by Philip the Evangelist. Its vividness of detail justifies so much. But it does not guarantee a miracle. Many men have been able to pass untouched through a hostile crowd, particularly among Eastern peoples, who have an ingrained fear of the fearless individual, however unprotected he may be. Such an event would easily be translated into a miracle. Indeed, we find that the fourth Gospel, which so often carries the miraculous tendencies of the other Gospels to their logical conclusion, makes the inviolability of Jesus' person a permanent characteristic (p. 98).

8. *The healing of Malchus's ear* (xxii. 51).—The story of the Betrayal has been worked over both by St. Matthew and by St. Luke. Both editors agree in inserting something after Mk.'s abrupt notice of the wounding of Malchus (to adopt the name given by Jn.). In Mt., Jesus rebukes St. Peter's violence; in Lk. He redresses the result of it. Each insertion is characteristic of its author. In Lk.'s case the alleged miracle is unique in the Gospels. The restoration, by a touch, of an ear completely, or even partially, cut off, is a cure which no faith could accomplish (indeed faith is not suggested) and no ordinary evidence could substantiate. Fortunately, we are not driven to this difficulty. The incident of the wounding of the high priest's servant, occurring, as it did, in the darkness, and amid the confusion of the arrest, is no more than alluded to in Mk. The later Gospels attempt to explain it, but without success. That it was St. Peter who struck the blow, and Malchus who received it, that Jesus said this or did that, is as uncertain as St. Luke's description of the cure. It is possible that St. Luke was misled by the wording of the command to put back the sword into its place (Mt. xxvi. 52), and misapplied it to the ear; but it is at least as likely that the addition was made deliberately, in order to enhance the central figure in the narrative. In any

case the passage is one of several that throw a curious light upon St. Luke's 'medical knowledge.'[1]

9. The only case which remains is that of *the widow's son at Nain* (vii. 11-17).—The description of the place—'a city called Nain'—is curiously vague for Lk.; and some features of the account read like 'commonplaces'—'he had compassion . . . weep not . . . I say unto thee, arise . . . sat up . . . gave him to his mother' (cp., for instance, the raising of Jairus's daughter). But 'the only son of his mother, and she was a widow' is a characteristic Lucan 'heightening.' And the use of 'the Lord' (ὁ Κύριος) in place of 'Jesus' ranks the passage with a large group of incidents peculiar to Lk. (x. 1, xi. 39, xii. 42, xiii. 15, xvii. 5, xviii. 6, xix. 8, xxii. 61), which possibly represent a single source, and might be identified (through xxii. 61) with a Petrine cycle of tradition. The story may, however, be a local one, like that of the incident at Nazareth, which St. Luke (or one of his informants) picked up twenty-five or thirty years afterwards, and inserted in this place to anticipate Jesus' words in vii. 22 (*νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται*, 'the dead are raised up'; so the single story of Jairus's daughter is not enough). There is some likelihood in the suggestion that, as the centurion's servant (vii. 2-10) represents the Gentiles, converted at a distance by the power of Christ, so the widow's son of Nain is a type of the Jewish Church, the only son of the widowed daughter of Zion, Jerusalem, which is raised by the miraculous touch of Christ to a new life.[2] It remains, in any case, a story of uncertain origin and value. And there is nothing, especially considering how soon after death a

[1] Even Westcott admits that this miracle 'seems not to fall within the true cycle of the Gospel miracles either in character or import' (*Introd. to Study of Gospels*, p. 476). In the Passion Play at Oberammergau, which, in this, as in other scenes, illustrates the incongruous results of the harmonistic method, a great deal is made of Malchus's healed ear. His comrades crowd round to look at it, and take care to point it out to the priests, as a proof of Jesus' miraculous powers.

[2] Loisy, *E.S.* i. 655.

funeral takes place in Palestine, to exclude the hypothesis of a natural recovery from some kind of trance as the original fact underlying the narrative (cp. p. 44).

(vii)

St. Luke's evidence may be summarised thus. (1) Owing to the uncertainty as to the state of his Marcan source, we cannot be quite sure whether he intends to omit any of the original group of miraculous stories. Possibly he does not. Apart from the two doubtful cases of the feeding of the four thousand and the withering of the fig-tree, there is no instance in this Gospel of a miracle omitted on critical grounds. (2) On the contrary, in his editing of the Marcan narrative St. Luke shows a decided tendency to emphasise and put beyond doubt the miraculousness of its supernatural features. (3) And in the new material which he adds miracles play a considerable part, the cures and wonders related being in several cases of an extreme kind.

It does not appear that, in his omissions from, or editing of the Marcan tradition, St. Luke is guided (except perhaps in a very few cases) by any new evidence. *The authority for this group of miracles, then, after all the changes through which they have passed in the hands of St. Matthew and St. Luke, remains St. Mark.*

In the case of the new material (1) the great majority of the alleged miracles are covered either by faith-healing, or by the tendency to translate a natural into a miraculous event; (2) it is undeniable that St. Luke's selection and editing of his materials are largely determined by his representation of Jesus not primarily as Messiah, but as 'the Saviour, the Healer of soul and body for all the world'[1]; (3) the evidence is nearly always unsatisfactory, for it rests on local traditions and hearsay, which were probably not collected for publication until twenty-five or

[1] Streeter in *Studies*, p. 224.

thirty years after the events that they describe, when it was no longer possible to authenticate them.

It is not necessary to suppose, and it would be impossible to prove, that such evidence is quite untrustworthy. Supernatural events are not often alleged unless (at any rate) something natural has happened. But it would be extremely unsafe to build upon such evidence, and quite unjustifiable to demand belief in miracles so poorly verified.

In view of the exaggerated estimates which are sometimes formed of St. Luke's trustworthiness as a historian, these considerations are of some interest. It remains to be seen whether the case is at all different with regard to the miracle-stories in the Acts.

But first it will be best to deal with the remaining Gospel.

CHAPTER VII

THE EVIDENCE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

(i)

The fourth Gospel raises larger problems than can be adequately discussed here. But it is necessary for the proper understanding of the miracles included in it that some estimate should be formed of its character and outlook as a whole.

The contrast between it and the Synoptic Gospels is well known. It is not confined, it is not even primarily related, to the subject-matter of the narrative. It is concerned chiefly with the point of view and method of treatment of the Gospel. The difference is generally expressed by saying that the first aim of the Synoptists was to record the facts, and of the author of the fourth Gospel to interpret the meaning of the facts. It is commonly added that in the fourth Gospel we have the work of an old disciple looking back from the end of a long life of Christian experience, and colouring his picture of the first times with his meditations of the last. The focus of interest for the Synoptists is Jesus, for the author of the fourth Gospel, Christ. Or, if this distinction be denied, we may say that they reached faith through the facts, whereas he reached the facts through faith. To them the material of faith was more essential, to him the results: to them the premises, to him the conclusion.

The contrast, at any rate, is one that cannot be ignored.

The fourth Gospel has a special character of its own ; and this may be described in two words—supernatural and spiritual.

(ii)

1. *Supernatural.*—In the Synoptic Gospels we have been dealing primarily with a body of early tradition, based on Mk. and Q., which, as evidence, takes its rise from the end of Jesus' ministry, and works back towards the beginning of it. The best and most detailed evidence is that for the last week in Jerusalem, for the Passion and the Crucifixion. From the apostolic traditions of that or of a rather later time come the outlines of the Galilean ministry, and the first collection of sayings. To these authorities are added by degrees a number of later and generally less trustworthy traditions.

Now the noticeable fact is that, at the centre of evidence —the week of the Passion—miracles do not occur, whereas, in proportion, as we pass further and further outwards in the circles of tradition, they become more and more frequent, till there comes a time when we can set no reasonable dividing-line between the canonical and the uncanonical, the historical and the legendary. It is the recognition of this fact which enables us to split off, with more or less certainty, the untrustworthy outer layers of tradition, and to reach the core of the historical Incarnation. *But no such process is possible with the fourth Gospel. Miracles are here no longer an outer layer. Jesus is miraculous through and through.* The author's point is to insist on the identity of the Christ whom the Church worships and the Christ who died at Jerusalem, of the Logos of speculative theology and the Jesus of apostolic experience ; and he does this in such a way as to transform the miracle-maker Himself into a miracle. It is not the existence of certain traditions which determines his representation of Christ : it is the presupposition of a certain Christology which determines the selection of certain

traditions. The Synoptists are, relatively speaking, at the mercy of their materials: in the fourth Gospel the materials are at the mercy of the writer. Holding a certain faith as to the Person of Christ, this author does not write an abstract theological treatise on the subject, but—what is much bolder and more effective—a biography, a Gospel, in order to give concrete shape to his teaching.

If such is the nature of the book, it matters comparatively little who wrote it. Even if its author were St. John the Apostle, and even if much or all of the biographical framework were more trustworthy than that of the Synoptic Gospels, our verdict on the book would remain the same. Whether the details are true or not, they are subordinate to the main thesis of the work, which is not historical, but theological. By that alone it stands or falls. Nor is the date of its composition of great importance, except to establish the relationship of the Johannine to other Christologies.

The fourth Gospel begins with a supernaturalistic account of the Incarnation. This it propounds in the prologue, stating (with a deliberate parallelism of expression to the opening of the Jewish Bible) that the story of Jesus is the story of the entrance into the world, under ordinary conditions of space and time, of the eternal Word of God. Pre-existent with God, He had been God's agent in the creation of the world, which now He visited and revivified as the Source of all spiritual life and light.

In accordance with this theory, the principal aim of Jesus' ministry is not, as in the Synoptic Gospels, to heal, to convert, to ransom men from the power of sin, to win by the surrender of this world the certainty of a world to come; but to demonstrate the Divine Presence in the world, to point always to Himself, to shepherd and sanctify a small body of faithful disciples, and to convict the Jewish nation as a whole of sin and unbelief.

The contrast, as we should expect, is not absolute. There are passages in the fourth Gospel which show the survival of the Synoptic view, and there are passages in the Synoptists which give colour to the Johannine theory. But the latter representation of Jesus is one-sided in a way that the former is not. By the exaggeration of isolated elements in the historical Jesus it has produced a new figure, which is, when compared with the old, unhistorical.

In place of subjects and methods of teaching designed to draw out faith and to give something (at any rate) that everybody can understand, the Jesus of the fourth Gospel puzzles and repels His hearers by long mystical discourses. There are some germs of parables, *e.g.* the Good Shepherd (x. 1 f.), and the Vine (xv. 1 f.). But they are not understood even by the apostles (x. 6), and they are contrasted with plain speaking (xvi. 29). The private conversations (iii. 1 f., iv. 6 f.) are full of the same obscurities as the public teaching. It is sometimes said that Jesus' words win converts (viii. 30), but more often that they repel (vi. 60, 66). To the faithful few they are 'the words of eternal life' (vi. 68), but they bewilder the crowd, and are apparently meant to do so. If they suggest any reply, it is generally a materialistic misunderstanding of the crudest kind (ii. 19, iii. 3, iv. 10, 15, 32, vi. 33, 52, viii. 18, 21, 33, 41, 51, xi. 11, 23, xiii. 36, xiv. 7, xvi. 16: this is a commonplace of the Gospel).

Again, Jesus is represented as having a supernatural power of reading men's thoughts (vi. 15, 61), watching their acts (i. 48), and divining their character (i. 42, 47). He 'knew all men,' and 'knew what was in man' (ii. 24-25). His 'prophetic' power includes knowledge of the private lives of complete strangers (iv. 16), and of future (vi. 70) or distant events (xi. 11). If He asks questions, it is not in order to get information (vi. 6).

He is supernaturally protected against assault or arrest. He comes and goes through hostile crowds (viii. 59, x. 39). His would-be captors fall to the ground before Him

(xviii. 6). Pilate has no power against Him (xix. 11). He is inviolable until 'His hour is come' (vii. 30, 44, viii. 20).

His attitude towards the Jews is not that of a fellow-countryman or a friend. He behaves as a foreigner would towards a people to whom He does not belong. He does not share their limitations, He does not sympathise with their mistakes, He does not bless their children, He does not eat and drink with their publicans and sinners; He stands aloof from them, as their accuser and their judge.

It is in accordance with this standpoint that the miracles assume an importance which they do not possess in the other Gospels. They become deliberate demonstrations of divine power. Certain Synoptic traditions are selected and reproduced; others are added from new sources to make up a perfect number (seven) of the most representative 'signs.' The miraculousness of the events is put beyond question. They are designed to prove the supernatural Christology which is the essence of the Gospel.

(iii)

2. *Spiritual.*—The divinity of Christ in the fourth Gospel, although manifesting itself (as we have just seen) in ways which are inconsistent with a normal human life, is essentially spiritual. That the divine sonship and pre-existence are not thought incompatible with a human parentage seems to be the proper inference from vi. 41-42.[1] There is no hint of the Virgin Birth in this Gospel. Two passages (i. 13, iii. 4-6) prefer spiritual birth to material in a way which would lose much of its point if a miraculous human birth were regarded as a necessary condition of the Incarnation. The Divine Sonship of Jesus, which in the oldest Gospel began at the Baptism, and in later speculation depended on a Virgin Birth, was, in the thought of this writer, thrown still further back into the eternal nature of God. We are here dealing with theories which, though not necessarily exclusive of one another, are alternative

[1] *v.* p. 157.

rather than supplementary. The whole doctrinal stress of the fourth Gospel, at any rate, falls outside any such materialistic hypothesis as the Virgin Birth (cf. p. 156).

Similarly the Apocalyptic element in the Synoptic Gospels is spiritualised. Jesus no longer talks of an approaching end of the world, a return in the clouds of heaven, and a solemn judgement of quick and dead. The Judgement has begun already in the κρίσις between belief and unbelief which is set up by Christ's divine claims. The Return takes place under the form of the coming of the Spirit, the Comforter, which is breathed upon the disciples after the Resurrection (xx. 22). Some features of the Apocalyptic Discourses are retained (xvi.), but form part of a sermon which pictures the Church as a society of believers living on in the present world, and the Messiahship as a spiritual revelation (xiv. 22-24) in the hearts of the faithful.

The Eucharist is spiritualised into a discourse on the Bread of Life, in which it is insisted that spiritual communion is the essence of the sacrament (vi. 63). At the Last Supper another ceremony is substituted for it.

In accordance with the Christology of the Gospel, all the great spiritual crises of the ministry—the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Temptation, and the Agony in the Garden, are omitted. In place of the baptismal formula, a discourse on spiritual regeneration (iii. 3); in place of the Agony, a few words in a public speech (xii. 27); in place of the Lord's prayer, a mystical prayer for the apostles, and a meditation on the Fatherhood of God (xvii.); in place of the missionary charge and sending out of the apostles, a discourse on their inner relationship to Christ, and through Him to God (xv.)—these are some of the more obvious phenomena in the fourth Gospel.

(iv)

In most of these cases the fourth Gospel does not invent. It takes certain small indications from the Synoptic narratives, and develops them out of all proportion to their

original meaning. It is just this lack of proportion which makes its representation so unreal.

There are enough traces of Synoptic outlines in this Gospel to show that its author was familiar with the ordinary Gospel type, and that he probably had the Synoptic narratives before him. Thus, though there is no Baptism, the ministry begins with the preaching of the Baptist, and Jesus is brought into relation with him. This is followed—though under changed circumstances—by the call of the first apostles. There are traces of a Galilean ministry, with such Marcan features as a Sabbath controversy (v. 10, 18, vii. 23, ix. 14, 16), the unbelief of Jesus' brethren (vii. 5), a miracle of feeding (vi. 1-14), 'the mountain' (vi. 3, 15), and journeys to and fro across the lake (vi.). The Passion narrative still predominates, and is treated on Synoptic lines: St. Peter's denial, the exposure of Judas, the double trial, the mocking, and Joseph of Arimathea, all reappear. Synoptic sources have been used in stories which are very differently told, as for instance in the miraculous draught of fish (xxi. 5), the healing of the nobleman's son (iv. 46-54), and the anointing at Bethany (xii. 1-8).

Sometimes the fourth Gospel seems to be correcting the Synoptic tradition. In two cases—Jesus' earlier visits to Jerusalem and the date of the Crucifixion—it may do so rightly.[1] But in other places it is almost certainly wrong; and there is no guarantee, apart from the assumption of apostolic authorship, that its alterations are based on good evidence. Indeed, it is more than probable that theological motives and love of symbolism account for many of them. The trial of Jesus, and the three years' scheme of chronology, are instances in point.

The arrangement of the Gospel is full of artificiality. The influence of certain numbers on the grouping of sayings and incidents, which we have already noticed in the Synoptic Gospels (p. 60), is very prominent.[2]

[1] Wendt, *St. John's Gospel*, p. 9 f.
[2] Cp. Loisy, *L'Évangile et L'Église*, p. 9.

The dialogues, again, are extremely artificial. Whoever Jesus' hearers may be, educated or uneducated, believers or unbelievers, they are consistently represented as misunderstanding and materialising His sayings. They are constantly asking 'leading questions,' which give the cue for discourses on this or that subject. With the possible exceptions of such private interlocutors as Nicodemus or the woman of Samaria, they are lay figures, whose function is to set off the central character of Christ. There is no distinction between the different Jewish parties—distinctions so significant in the Synoptic Gospels—they are just 'the Jews'; they are all equally hostile to the claims of Christ; He is equally opposed to them all. Yet, on the other hand, they are more varied than He is, and what development there is in the situation takes place on their side, not on His.

To sum up, the aim of the fourth Gospel is to place the timeless, spaceless person of the Word of God into the narrow conditions of time and place in which Jesus of Nazareth lived and died. This can be done in faith without damage to either side of the antinomy. It cannot be done in history without a weakening either of the humanity or of the divinity of Christ. The fourth Gospel is the highest achievement of Christian devotion. But as history it fails. It is inconsistent with the evidence of the Synoptic Gospels. Its Jesus is obviously God; but He is no longer man. Every detail of the fourth Gospel is subordinate to its central idea, that *Jesus was God not because of His humanity, but in spite of it*—not in those qualities which He shared with men, but in those in which He was different from them.

Such is the background against which the miracles of the fourth Gospel stand out. The Gospel is the story of a visit paid by God to the Jews. Its miracles are carefully selected proofs that it was God who came.

(v)

1. *The turning of water into wine* at the marriage feast at Cana (ii. 1-11) has no parallel in the Synoptic Gospels, unless it be based on the sayings in Mk. ii. 19-22, xiv. 25 (cf. Jn. iii. 29, Rev. xix. 7). Nor does the Synoptic tradition know of any period early in the ministry when the mother of Jesus is likely to have been living with the disciples, or to have believed in Jesus, and expected Him to work a miracle (ii. 5); though it would be quite in the manner of this Gospel if the rebuke in ii. 4 were a recognition of the facts recorded in Mk. iii. 21, 31-35. Failing any help from the Synoptic tradition, we can only judge the authority of the present story on internal evidence.

The knowledge of Jewish customs which it shows cannot possibly prove that the narrative is derived from first-hand evidence. This life-likeness might be due to the author; but even then it might be archæological, or derived from a source. In any case, however accurate it were, it could not substantiate the alleged miracle.

For it is as a miracle that the incident is recorded; and the story is told in such a way as to bring out the miraculousness of it to the furthest extent. It is a magical transformation of one thing into another, done on a large scale, under circumstances that admitted of no mistake or trickery, and in the presence of many witnesses. The miraculous change is worked without word or touch; its agents are common servants, who do not know what they are doing; and the wine produced is of the finest quality. As a σημεῖον nothing could be more complete. It was a manifestation of Jesus' glory, and it had the desired effect —'His disciples believed on Him.'

If there has been any validity in our method of inquiry hitherto, and any value in its results, we must view with grave suspicion a narrative which defies them both. The story of Cana belongs to no known strain of tradition; the

miracle has no certified analogies.[1] Its context, and the stress laid upon its evidential value, are such as to throw great doubt upon its historical truth.

And yet the evidential motive is less strong than another —the symbolical. The changing of water into wine may symbolise the process of religious conversion, when by Jesus' supernatural power human nature is transformed into divine. Or it may symbolise the substitution of the Gospel for the Law through the preaching of Christ.[2] The miraculousness of the act is still the essence of the analogy. But historical truth is now subordinated to spiritual in a way which is foreign to the best Synoptic tradition, and which (wherever it occurred) would cast suspicion upon a historical document.

2. *The healing of a nobleman's son* (iv. 46-54) is, like the last incident, connected with Cana. Indeed, the wording of iv. 54 (compared with ii. 11) is probably a sign that in St. John's source both incidents belonged to the same visit to Galilee. This is one of several indications that the chronological framework of the fourth Gospel is artificial. But the similarity of this story to Q's tradition of the healing of the Centurion's servant (Mt. viii. 5-13=Lk. vii. 1-10, xiii. 28-30), cannot be ignored (cf. p. 54). If all three narratives be based upon a single original, the difference in treatment is most instructive. To St. Matthew the essential point is the Centurion's faith, to St. Luke the fact that he is a Gentile, and to St. John the miraculousness of the cure. Both St. Matthew and St. Luke assume that a cure was worked, and worked at a distance; but it does not occur to them to emphasise this: the religious value of the incident lies elsewhere. To St. John, on the contrary, the facts are eloquent of Jesus' divinity. The man's request is taken as an opportunity for a miracle (iv. 48), and it is expressly mentioned that the recovery of the patient began from the moment when Jesus' words were spoken. The

[1] It is not unknown, however, in later legends. e.g. *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, ii. 7.

[2] Pfleiderer, *Christian Origins*, p. 267; for more detailed symbolism, cp. Schmiedel in *E.B.* 1796.

change of the disease from palsy to fever is perhaps connected with this notion of the method of cure.

In spite of the liberties which have been taken in editing this story, there is no need to doubt that it was originally based on an actual incident—either a case of faith-healing, or a natural coincidence to which a supernatural meaning came to be attached (cp. p. 55).

3. *An infirm man healed at Bethesda* (v. 2-9).—This cure is worked at Jerusalem, but its circumstances belong to Galilee. The Synoptic tradition knows of no cures at Jerusalem. The Sabbath controversy, with which this incident and that in ix. 1-7 are connected, belongs to the early days of the Galilean ministry. The words of healing —'Arise, take up thy bed'— are already familiar in Mk. ii. 11 and parallel passages. Indeed, the idea of the close connection of sickness and sin, which underlies both incidents, suggests that the present passage is a variant of the healing of the paralytic man in Mk. ii. 1-12. It is quite in St. John's manner that the sabbatarian element (the presence of which testifies to the origin of the narrative) should drop out of sight, and the evidential motive become essential. That is why Jesus is made to pick out one case for healing from a crowd—not because of this man's special faith, nor because he is more pitiable than the rest, but because he has been 'thirty and eight years in his infirmity,' and therefore the miracle is the more extraordinary. The symbolical meaning of the incident may be thus explained.[1] The sick man represents the Jewish people; the length of his illness the thirty-eight years' wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness (Deut. ii. 14—the number does not occur elsewhere in the Bible); the five porches of Bethesda the five books of Moses, obedience to which had brought the people no help.[2] Jesus is the first to be able to cure the national infirmity.[3]

[1] Schmiedel, *Johannine Writings*, p. 99.

[2] Or, 'the five senses of unredeemed humanity—*i.e.* the unregenerate passions.'—Schmiedel in *E.B.* 1797.

[3] Cf. Pfleiderer, *op. cit.* p. 267.

We cannot be sure that this incident did not occur at the time and place alleged. But more probably it is an altered version of a Galilean story of faith-healing.

4. *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* (vi. 1-14), together with the incident which follows it, is taken over with little alteration from the Synoptic tradition. That other miracles were available, and that these two were specially selected, is implied by vi. 2. The main reasons for their selection appear to have been, first, their greater miraculousness; and, secondly, the fact that their symbolical meaning had already been appreciated by the Synoptists (*v.* pp. 46, 48). They need so little 'improvement' to make them worthy of their place among St. John's seven 'signs,' that they are taken over almost without alteration. Only, in the case of the feeding, it is made quite clear that the supply of food was insufficient (vi. 9), that Jesus meant from the first to work the miracle (vi. 6), and that it was popularly regarded as a sign of His prophetic office (vi. 14).[1]

The symbolism of the miracle of feeding is amply drawn out in the discourse which follows (vi. 26 f.); but it does not seem to have further affected the form of the narrative, except perhaps in the introduction of characters typical of parties in the Church—Philip, Andrew, and the 'lad.' For there is no reason to suppose that these details are added from the recollection of a writer who is otherwise entirely dependent on the Synoptic authority. We have already seen (p. 46) in what way the story of the miraculous feeding may have arisen. There is nothing in St. John's version of it which suggests any other view.

5. *The walking on the Lake* (vi. 16-21) reappears in its Synoptic context, and without serious alteration. Here, as in the last incident, both the miracle and its symbolism were thought to be sufficiently evident. One new point is, however, added. Jesus did not actually enter the

[1] Commentators do not seem to see how curious this last expression is: is it one of the Synoptic relics in John?

boat; but when they were willing that He should do so, 'straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going' (vi. 21). This change—whether it means that the last part of the journey by boat was miraculously accelerated, or that Jesus walked right across the lake—is partly due to a desire to emphasise Jesus' power.[1] But it may also be partly due to symbolism. The boat is the congregation of the faithful. Jesus, from an external position of superiority, tests their faith. Their recognition of Him is immediately rewarded by achievement of the end of the journey.

There is no indication that St. John knew of St. Matthew's story of St. Peter's attempt to walk on the lake. Even if he had known it he might have left it out as derogatory to the uniqueness of Jesus' powers.

6. *The cure of a man born blind* (ix. 1-7) resembles the healing of the infirm man (v. 2-9, above) in being constructed of Galilean material, and yet placed in Jerusalem. In particular, it belongs to the time of the Sabbath controversy (ix. 14, 16), the idea of the connection of sickness and sin is prominent (ix. 2), the Pharisees appear as Jesus' opponents (ix. 13, 15, 16, 40), and the method of healing employed closely resembles that described in Mk. vii. 33, viii. 23—fragments of original tradition which St. Matthew and St. Luke omit as unedifying, but which in John are outweighed by the greatness of the miracle.

For the point of the incident lies in the miracle. The man is an extreme case, 'born blind.' The uniqueness of the cure is repeatedly emphasised (ix. 16, 18, 32). Jesus is represented not as one who commonly did works of healing, but as one who performed a small number of indubitable miracles, designed and accepted as evidential.

The symbolical meaning of the incident is obvious. The

[1] Cf. Schmiedel, *Johannine Writings*, p. 19.

restoration of the man's physical sight corresponds to his spiritual awakening, the means of which is the sacrament of Baptism. This is contrasted with the spiritual blindness of the unbelieving Pharisees (ix. 39-41). The basis of the story was probably the incident in Mk. viii. 22-25, where the gradual restoration of the man to sight readily suggests the gradual awakening of faith in the present passage.

The details which give such a remarkable appearance of first-hand evidence to the story are probably due to the literary skill of the author, or to his intermediate authorities. They are artificial; that is to say, they are variations on the theme that such a miracle as this would have been regarded as unique and incredible—an idea which would be out of place in the earliest Gospel tradition, and which springs from the writer's Christology, not from the historical situation.

7. *The Raising of Lazarus* (xi. 1-44) is the last and greatest of St. John's seven 'signs.' There were similar stories in the Synoptic tradition, which he might have reproduced —the raising of Jairus's daughter, or of the widow's son of Nain. If he preferred to introduce the present story from some other source, it was probably because he found it more suggestive of symbolism. Its origin was possibly the suggestion made at the end of the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Lk. xvi. 27-31): 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead.' This may afterwards have been worked up into something like the present narrative in a source which we no longer possess, and then appropriated by the author of the fourth Gospel.

There are grave difficulties in the alternative view, that we are here dealing with a genuine incident which the Synoptic tradition omits. The argument from silence is not always weak. The omission of so crucial a miracle, which is described not only as making a great sensation in Jerusalem, but also as being the immediate cause of Jesus'

arrest and death, would argue the Synoptic tradition most untrustworthy.

As in other cases, so here, St. John takes pains to emphasise the miraculousness of the incident. Whereas Jairus's daughter had only just died, and the widow's son at Nain was being carried to burial (*i.e.* probably, following the usual Eastern custom, on the day of death), Lazarus has been dead four days, and corruption has begun (xi. 39).[1] Subsidiary points are Jesus' supernatural knowledge that Lazarus is dead (xi. 11, 14), and the miraculous way in which the body comes out of the tomb, 'bound hand and foot with grave-clothes' (xi. 44).[2] Moreover, the story represents Jesus Himself as allowing Lazarus to die, in order that He may have an opportunity for working the miracle (xi. 4, 6); Jesus announces beforehand that He is to be raised as a challenge to faith (xi. 11, 15). He groans and weeps at the unbelief of the grieving, doubting bystanders (xi. 33, 35, 38),[3] and He thanks God that He is able to work so convincing a sign (xi. 42).

The symbolical motive is no less clear than the miraculous; Jesus Himself points the meaning of the incident—'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth on Me, shall never die' (xi. 25-26).

We have travelled far from the manner and meaning even of the more extreme Synoptic miracles. Whatever

[1] Cp. the claims made for St. Thomas of Canterbury (p. 233).

[2] Curious witness is borne to the sheer miraculousness of this incident by M. Maeterlinck in his play *Mary Magdalene*. The poet, endeavouring to picture the scene realistically, is driven to explain away the miracle. 'The dead man,' he says, 'obeying the order [Jesus' command, "Come forth"], slowly bent in two; then, *snapping the bandages that fastened his legs*, he stood up erect, like a stone, all white, with his arms bound [how then could he have unbandaged his legs?] and his head veiled. *With small, almost impossible steps*, guided by the light, he came forth from the grave' (E.T. p. 87).

[3] This, not human pity, is perhaps the meaning of the words 'Jesus wept' (Schmiedel, *op. cit.* p. 31).

the nature of St. John's original authority, the story has been so much worked up and 'theologised,' that we can hardly suppose that, as it stands, it is a true representation of historical fact.

8. Chapter xxi. is an appendix to the Gospel, and the story of the miraculous draught of fish, which it contains, stands outside the list of selected 'signs' (xxi. 1-14). The word σημεῖον is not used in the narrative. No more 'signs' are needed. The incident is treated as a 'manifestation' of One already sufficiently proved divine by His resurrection (xxi. 14).

The source of the story was probably in part the Marcan narrative of the call of St. Peter, and in part a tradition unknown to Mk. or Q, but familiar to St. Luke, who makes a rather different use of it (v. 1-11; *v.* p. 89). This second tradition, then, in which a fortunate catch of fish has been attributed to Jesus' supernatural knowledge, is probably of later origin.

In any case it is St. John's love of symbolism which determines the details of the story. Jesus is made to direct the seven fishermen—the number is made up by the addition of two unnamed disciples (xxi. 2)—in the evangelistic work of the Church. Their unaided efforts are fruitless. With His help they prosper miraculously. The hundred and fifty-three fish, representing (according to Philonian principles, applied by St. Augustine), the Law and the Spirit incorporated into the Church,[1] are swept into the ecclesiastical net without any damage to its unity. Jesus then feeds the workers with the one Bread and one Fish before giving them their pastoral commission.[2]

[1] The Law = 10 (the ten commandments); the Spirit (Rev. i. 4, iii. 1, etc.) = 7. According to Philo the fulfilment of any potentiality, say 3, is 1+2+3; the fulfilment of 4 is 1+2+3+4. The fulfilment of 10+7 (or 17) is 1+2+3 . . . +17, *i.e.* 153 (Schmiedel in *E.B.* 1796).

[2] Schmiedel in *E.B.* 1785.

(vi)

Although the Christological theory which underlies the fourth Gospel differs so widely from that of the Synoptists, it would be a mistake to suppose that the forms in which it is expressed find no prototypes in the earlier Gospels, or to force the antithesis between the old miracles and the new. St. John's representation of Jesus is reached by an unnatural selection and exaggeration of traits suggested by the Synoptists, as much as by a new supernatural characterisation. The miracles which he describes are in three cases based on Synoptic material. His method of editing this material is similar to St. Matthew's and St. Luke's method of editing Mk.: it is, if anything, less drastic. His exaggeration of the miraculous elements carries on a process begun by them. So does his subordination of historical fact to theology. These things were part of the normal development of Christian thought during the first and second centuries.[1] In two points, however, St. John's attitude is so pronounced that we shall be inclined to regard him as a pioneer, at least among the writers of the New Testament. One is his doctrine of the Incarnation—his attempt to materialise the Christ of religious experience under the form and the historical conditions of Jesus of Nazareth. The other is his love of symbolism. It follows from the first of these that he regards the miracles as deliberate *σημεῖα*—evidences of Christ's divinity, regarded and vouchsafed as such by Jesus Himself.[2] It follows from the second that the actual circumstances of the miracles are of little importance to him—provided that their miraculousness is beyond question—except to furnish analogies to the spiritual world. In these two points the fourth Gospel definitely

[1] Cp. Wendt, *St. John's Gospel*, p. 28.

[2] This remains true of the narrative parts of the Gospel, even if we agree with Wendt as to the different point of view taken by the discourses (*op. cit.* p. 58).

breaks with the Synoptic tradition, which faithfully records Jesus' refusal to work a sign, and which remains throughout primarily historical. Nor is the divergence partial or accidental. Its Christology is the essential matter of the fourth Gospel : its symbolism is its essential manner. So that we are forced to a plain issue, and must choose between the Synoptic and the Johannine points of view.

If there is any force in our previous arguments, we shall be right in choosing the former, and in concluding that the fourth Gospel cannot be treated as a historically true account of the 'miracles' of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EVIDENCE OF ST. LUKE

(ii) *The Acts*

(i)

THE second volume of St. Luke's Ecclesiastical History is one of the turning-points of New Testament criticism. This is due almost entirely to the fact that there exists, embodied in it, a series of extracts from what appears to be the diary of a companion of St. Paul. It is from these 'we-sections,' as they are called, that our argument must start.

1. It is generally admitted, even by those who deny the Lucan authorship of these sections, that they represent the genuine reminiscences of one of St. Paul's fellow-travellers. Whatever may be thought of some other elements of the story, the careful notes of time and place are indubitably authentic.

Various authors have been suggested; but it may fairly be said that there is none with claims approaching those of St. Luke, and that the Lucan authorship would not have been seriously doubted unless it had been traditional.

The evidence for unity of style and language as between WS.[1] and the rest of Acts is overwhelming.[2] This means either that the diarist of WS. was the author of Acts, or that both WS. and the other sources have been very thoroughly

[1] WS. stands throughout for the 'we-sections,' and St. Luke for their author.

[2] *v.* Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ* (second edition), p. 182 f.; Burkitt, *Gospel History*, p. 110 f.; Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, p. 26 f.

edited by the compiler of the whole book. But the latter alternative breaks down, because it does not account for the retention of the 'we' throughout these sections. It cannot have been left in accidentally by so thoroughgoing an editor. It might have been retained by design, if it had been part of the editor's aim to emphasise his eye-witness. But there is no evidence that this was so. We may, therefore, safely adopt the alternative hypothesis — the Lucan authorship of the whole book.

2. If the authority of WS. stands so high—if it is the central focus of eye-witness to which the rest of the picture must be adjusted—it becomes a matter of importance to establish its limits. Clearly we cannot confine it simply to those sentences which contain 'we' or 'us.' For instance :—

xvi. 10. The transition from the preceding narrative to WS. is carefully covered up : the 'straightway' shows that St. Luke was with St. Paul at the time of the vision, and probably throws his authority over the incidents immediately preceding it.

xx. 4. The list of St. Paul's companions clearly rests upon the authority of St. Luke, who met them at Troas (next verse, WS.).

xx. 16-17. *Ex hypothesi* St. Luke was on board ship with St. Paul at this time, and it is natural to suppose that he heard the speech which follows. It would be hypercritical to suppose that he did not land with St. Paul, and that he indicates this by dropping the 'we.'

xxi. 18. St. Luke is described as being present at an interview which (strictly) falls outside WS.

xxviii. 3-6. It is probably implied by xxviii. 2 that St. Luke was present.

On the other hand, some parts of the narrative that appear to belong to WS. may not really do so. Thus :—

xvi. 18. The actual exorcism of the girl with a spirit of divination takes place 'many days' after her first appearance—possibly after St. Luke has left the city: in which case it should not be included in WS.

xx. 11-13. Eutychus's fall from the window takes place in St. Luke's presence. But the 'bringing him alive' is placed after St. Paul's departure at daybreak, and therefore *a fortiori* after St. Luke and the other disciples had started. WS. may not be responsible for the result of the 'miracle.' [1]

3. We may now give a preliminary analysis of WS., allotting the sections which fall outside it to a body of tradition which we may call, for sake of convenience, D.

	WS.	D.	
Chapter xvi. .	9-17	18-40	
xvii.-xix. .		whole	
xx. .		1-3	
	4-11	12	
	13-18[a]		
	[18[b]-25]		[Reports of speeches or interviews within WS., which may be considered doubtful, are bracketed.]
	26-38		
xxi. .	1-18		
	[19-25]	26-40	
xxii.-xxvi. .		whole	
xxvii. .	whole		
xxviii. .	1-16		
	[17-31]		

4. It is important to arrive at some estimate of the nature and value of the sources which we have grouped together under D. It is natural to suppose that for those parts of St. Paul's journeys, which were not covered by his own recollections, St. Luke would in the first place rely upon information derived from others of St. Paul's companions.

For the incidents at Philippi (xvi. 18-40), Thessalonica (xvii. 1-9) and Berœa (xvii. 10-14), Silas was doubtless the chief authority. The visit to Athens (xvii. 16-34) seems

[1] No evidential stress is laid on these small points.

to be reported on St. Paul's own authority. The vivid and clever vein of story-telling here, which comes out again in the description of the riot at Ephesus (xix. 23-41) is probably his own: St. Luke is reproducing subsequent conversations. Silas is again the authority for Corinth (xviii. 1-17): perhaps Timothy also. There follows an exceedingly cursory account (1) of a journey from Cenchreæ to Ephesus and Cæsarea, and (2) of a missionary tour through 'the regions of Galatia and Phrygia' (xviii. 18-23); since no companions of St. Paul are mentioned again till the end of the later visit to Ephesus (xix. 22), it is natural to suppose that St. Luke was without his usual authorities for this part of the narrative. The story of Apollos (xviii. 24-xix. 7) is probably derived from Aquila and Priscilla. The summary of two years' ministry at Ephesus (xix. 8-22) is of composite origin. The Ephesian elders (xx. 17), Timothy and Erastus (xix. 22), Gaius and Aristarchus (xix. 29), and St. Paul himself may have contributed to it. In xx. 1-3 there is another very cursory description of a long journey. This may be partly due to the fact that no new places are visited. But it is also possible that St. Luke himself and most of the disciples mentioned in xx. 4 did not join St. Paul until the end of the journey at Philippi. For the account of St. Paul's arrest and imprisonment at Jerusalem and Cæsarea (xxi. 26-xxvi.), which is given with a surprising amount of detail, St. Luke has not only personal recollection to draw upon (we assume that his reappearance in xxvii. 1 does not exclude his presence in Jerusalem or Cæsarea during much of what precedes); for St. Paul had a sister and nephew and friends in Jerusalem (xxiii. 16, xxiv. 23) who were of sufficient position to bribe Felix if they had wished to do so (xxiv. 26). Mnason at Jerusalem (xxi. 16) and Philip at Cæsarea (xxi. 8) had been his hosts. Some of these, perhaps St. Luke himself, had access to the prisoner (xxiv. 23). Some of the details in the account of the Jews' plot and the journey to Cæsarea (xxiii. 13, 17, 19, 23) are certainly

given from first-hand description. Claudius Lysias's letter has been seen or copied (xxiii. 26). St. Paul's speeches have been reported in substance by some one who heard them.

It is hardly to be expected that we should be able to trace all St. Luke's sources of information. But it is fairly evident that D is based on evidence which is, for the most part, only less trustworthy than WS. *The second part of Acts, as a whole, represents either St. Luke's own recollections, or information derived from the principal persons concerned.* This does not exclude the possibility that some incidents rest only upon hearsay, or that St. Luke's informants may have made mistakes. But it puts WS. and D upon an even surer footing, with regard to the period covered by Acts, than that occupied by Mk. and Q in the case of the Gospels. This conclusion is of great importance for the question of miracles.

(ii)

It is clear that the earlier part of Acts, though it stands first in order of history, comes last in degree of authority. St. Luke's real starting-point and centre of interest was the missionary work of St. Paul. What preceded that was, for him, a prologue, the chief interest of which lay in its relation to later developments. The writing of these early chapters was a problem in historical reconstruction.

The sources of these chapters have been so exhaustively examined by Professor Harnack,[1] that we cannot do better than accept provisionally his analysis of them. It may not be certain or final, but it represents a thorough application of the right methods.

The German critic does not base his analysis on linguistic evidence. 'As for the first half of the work,' he says, 'every attempt to make a scientific analysis of the sources on the basis of vocabulary and style has proved abortive.

[1] *The Acts of the Apostles*, chap. v.

A most thorough and detailed investigation has taught me that everything here is so "Lukan" in character, that by the method of linguistic investigation no sure results can be attained.'[1] He is, therefore, driven to group the narratives according to their probable local origin.

This is a method which we have already found to be suggestive in the case of St. Luke's Gospel (*e.g.* p. 90). It is, of course, easily liable to error. For it does not follow that, because a story moves towards a climax,everything proper to that movement belongs to one source, and everything that could be called a digression from it to another. No real historian writes like that. The most elementary power of putting oneself into the position of one's characters—and St. Luke had this power in no elementary degree—would account for many of the phenomena. Still, doubtless there *were* sources, and they were chiefly of local origin. The method of investigation, when properly guarded, is a right one.

The results of Harnack's investigation may be summarised as follows :—

Ch. i. 1-14. Ascension story, 'probably the latest tradition in the Acts . . . inserted by St. Luke on the authority of a legend of very advanced development.'

i. 15-26. Appointment of Matthias. Of uncertain origin.

ii. Recension B of the history of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and its consequences.

iii.-v. 16. Recension A of same history (Jerusalem-Cæsarean or Petro-Philippine source).

v. 17-42. Continuation of B.

vi.-viii. 4. Jerusalem-Antiochean source (which we may call C).

viii. 5-40. Continuation of A.

[1] Page 163.

ix. 1-30. Conversion of St. Paul, 'interpolated from a separate source.'

ix. 31 - xi. 18. Continuation of A.

xi. 19-30. Continuation of C.

xii. 1-24. Continuation of A.

xii. 25-xv. 35. Continuation of C.

There remains the passage (xv. 36-xvi. 8) which links the first part to the second part of Acts, and which, though it may be partly covered by the authority of WS., is best considered as belonging to D.

Looking at this evidence as a whole we see that, except where we can suppose it to have been checked by first-hand information derived from St. Paul and his friends, it is of secondary, though still of considerable, value. It represents the information which St. Luke was able to gather from people whom he met on his travels, and from stories that he heard told in the Christian communities at Antioch, or Jerusalem, or Cæsarea. There is no sure evidence that written sources were used; nor that any attempt had been made before St. Luke's time to formulate or verify these ecclesiastical traditions.

The trustworthiness of St. Luke's evidence cannot be lightly assumed on the ground of his talents as a historian. His literary style and craftsmanship are far in advance of those of the other evangelists. He is a born story-teller. Without having (as is sometimes fancied) either the science of a modern physician or the knowledge of a master mariner, he is an acute observer and accurate describer of technical matters. But this falls far short of proving that all that he reports is true. His representation of the early community is hotly contested. His biography of St. Paul seems to be at variance, in some important points, with the evidence of the Epistles. And certainly in such a matter as the miracles we must examine his evidence, as we should that of any other writer, without partiality.

(iii)

Let us begin by examining the 'miraculous' incidents in WS., remembering the very high authority which this source possesses, as based on the reminiscences of a companion of St. Paul.

1. One frequently recurring phenomenon—the '*gift of prophecy*'—may be excluded from the start, since there is nothing miraculous about it. Mentions of it are commonest in WS., because St. Paul himself was a prophet (xiii. 1). But it occurs also in D and C, and was, like the 'gift of tongues,' a recognised form of spiritual enthusiasm in the early Christian community.

WS. xxi. 9, 10 ; xxvii. 10, 22, 26, 31, 34.
D. xix. 6 ; xx. 23.
C. xi. 28 ; xiii. 1.

At its simplest it was a premonition of danger or guidance or deliverance, such as is described in rather different language by D in xvi. 6, 7. In some few cases (*e.g.* Agabus, xxi. 10 ; cp. C xi. 28), it takes a more definite shape, and is assimilated to the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament. In neither case need it be miracle.[1]

2. St. Paul was not only a 'prophet.' He also saw '*visions*.' WS. gives two cases of this—the vision of a man of Macedonia at Troas (xvi. 9), and of an angel of God, during the voyage to Rome (xxvii. 23). These phenomena, again, are widely distributed in Acts, and undoubtedly occurred among the early Christians, from the time of the Resurrection appearances (i. 3) onwards.

[1] It would not be difficult to find modern analogies. Writing between 1834 and 1844, about thirty years before the Suez Canal was completed, and nearly half a century before the establishment of British supremacy in Egypt, Kinglake foretold the time when 'the Englishman, leaning far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile, and sit on the seats of the Faithful' (*Eothen*, chap. xx.).

WS. xvi. 9; xxvii. 23.
D. xviii. 9; xxii. 17; xxiii. 11 } (St. Paul).
A. viii. 26 (Philip); x. 3 (Cornelius); x. 11 (St. Peter); xii. 7 (St. Peter).
C. vii. 55 (Stephen).
Others. i. 10 (the Apostles); ix. 3 (St. Paul).

In St. Paul's case, they date from the time of his conversion (ix. 3), and depend upon a distinct predisposition to such forms of religious experience. In any case, such visions need not be miraculous (cp. p. 33).

Nothing, of course, is more obvious than that the early community believed intensely in the Holy Spirit—breathed it, lived in it, looked for it, and found it everywhere. Nor is there any reason to doubt the reality of many of the phenomena which are ascribed to this inspiration—the sense of divine guidance; the gifts of tongues, and prophecy, and healing; visions of angels, voices, appearances of fire; sudden conversions. In fact, there existed an atmosphere that has many analogies in times of Revival meetings and missions—an atmosphere which invariably accompanies and commonly creates stories of miracles.

3. In striking contrast with the earliest Gospel tradition, WS. only once describes *works of healing*. This is at Melita (xxviii. 8, 9) where first the father of Publius is cured of 'fever and dysentery,' and then 'the rest also which had diseases in the island came, and were cured.' There is nothing whatever to exclude the ordinary methods of faith-healing in this case.

4. *The case of Eutychus* (xx. 7-12) demands separate treatment. The importance that St. Luke attaches to the incident, and the words (ἤρθη νεκρός: contrast *e.g.* ὡσεὶ νεκρός, Mk. ix. 26) by which he seeks to exclude a natural cure, show that he thought that St. Paul had restored a dead body to life. But there is no evidence that the case was more than one of concussion of the brain [1]

[1] Sanday, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 217.

—an idea supported by the natural meaning of St. Paul's words 'his life is in him,' and by the fact that no immediate recovery is mentioned. Indeed, the postponement of the result of the incident to vs. 12 perhaps indicates that it was reported after St. Paul and his companions had left Troas (cp. p. 115), and that it does not rest on the authority of WS. There is, in any case, no sufficient evidence either that the boy was killed, or that he was restored to life. St. Luke has probably given a supernatural meaning to an incident that was originally natural.

5. The incident of *the viper at Melita* (xxviii. 3-6), although imbedded in WS., might possibly belong to D, and represent a story told by St. Paul himself. The real interest of the story is not St. Paul's immunity to snake-bite—though it was for this reason, as Mk. xvi. 18 shows, that the story was commonly preserved—but the behaviour of the barbarians (cp. the people of Lystra, xiv. 11, the Athenians, xvii. 21, and the Ephesians, xix. 23 f.—all in D). In any case no miracle is actually stated: St. Luke leaves the case open, either because he was really doubtful, or because it never occurred to him to doubt.[1]

The latter is the more probable explanation. We should not be justified in saying that St. Luke invented miracles. But this evidence of WS., taken with that of the third Gospel (cp. p. 93), shows that he was extremely credulous in accepting miraculous stories, or in interpreting doubtful incidents in a miraculous sense.

If, in spite of this, we can find no more than two such incidents in the whole of WS., that is strong evidence for the relative rarity of the miraculous element in the earliest and best attested authorities.

[1] Additional cause was given for the preservation (though hardly for the invention) of this story by the saying in Lk. x. 19—itself an echo from Ps. xci. 13—'Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions.'

(iv)

1. D, as we have already seen (*v.* p. 120), is uncommonly rich in visions and prophecy. But these need no longer detain us.

2. It includes two accounts of healing—one, the exorcism of a *girl with a 'spirit of divination'* at Philippi (xvi. 18, regarded as belonging to D : *v.* p. 115), the other a *summary of cures* done (indirectly) by St. Paul at Ephesus (xix. 11). The latter is a curious instance of the more superstitious side of faith-healing. But no one who knows anything of the history of exorcism, or of faith-healing, would want a miraculous interpretation of these incidents.

3. *The earthquake at Philippi* (xvi. 25) was, no doubt, a perfectly natural event[1]; though here again St. Luke has given a miraculous turn to the narrative by emphasising the security of the prisoners (vs. 24) before the earthquake, the completeness of their freedom after it ('*all* the doors were opened, and *every one's* bands were loosed,' vs. 26), and the behaviour of the jailor (vs. 29).

Thus D, the next best authority to WS., is equally remarkable for its freedom from miracles—a fact the more striking when we remember how much ground this source covers, how many years of St. Paul's life, and how many different scenes of missionary work.

In the whole of the latter part of Acts, where, for the first time in the New Testament (since we left St. Paul), we come to really close quarters with our witnesses, we find that there is not a single credibly attested miracle.

(v)

The contrast, when we pass from D to A, from the first-hand evidence of St. Paul's companions to the traditions of the Palestinian Church, and from the travel-stories of the Greeks to the fireside gossip of the Jews, is quite startling.

1. No stress need be laid on the stories of *visions*

[1] Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, 1st ed., p. 220.

(*v.* p. 121), though these are no longer confined to the visionary temperament of a St. Paul, but are attributed to St. Peter, to Philip, and to the heathen Cornelius.

2. More important are the accounts of *cures*. A lame man (iii. 2), more than forty years old (iv. 22), is immediately healed, so that 'leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping.' 'By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people (v. 12) . . . insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. And there also came together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one' (v. 15-16). Philip, again, did 'signs and great miracles' (viii. 13) in Samaria: 'from many of those which had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed' (viii. 7). St. Peter healed a man who had been in bed with paralysis for eight years (ix. 33).

The most remarkable of these passages (v. 15) claims for St. Peter powers analogous to those claimed for St. Paul in xix. 11, and is probably affected by the parallelism which St. Luke seeks to set up between the two apostles.[1] The Petrine cycle of traditions (which accounts for ix. 33) we have already had some reason to mistrust (*v.* p. 73), and shall have more. The summaries of miracles in Jerusalem and Samaria do not include anything that could not be covered by faith-healing: but summaries are always poor evidence.

3. It is, however, in another group of stories, describing certain *wonders*, that the real nature of A best comes out. During a time of prayer the place in which the apostles were gathered together 'was shaken'—it is implied, supernaturally (iv. 31). Two members of the community are struck dead at St. Peter's words, as a judgement on their

[1] *v.* note at end of chapter.

sin (v. 5, 10). Philip is 'caught away' by the 'Spirit of the Lord,' and conveyed miraculously from the Jerusalem-Gaza road to Azotus, a distance of about twenty miles (viii. 39-40). St. Peter restores a dead woman to life (ix. 36), and is miraculously delivered from prison (xii. 6), an iron gate opening 'of its own accord' (xii. 10). The death of Herod is attributed to an 'angel of the Lord,' who 'smote him' (xii. 23).

Let us look at these stories in detail.

(1) Whether or not we accept the theory that iv. 31 is A's account of the Day of Pentecost (certainly the parallelism between ii. 42-47 and iv. 32-35 suggests some such explanation), the 'shaking' of the room, which is not further described, may be a misinterpretation of a natural event (cp. the case at Philippi, xvi. 25), or a misrepresentation of the ecstatic trembling of the worshippers.

(2) The *deaths of Ananias and Sapphira* (v. 5-10) were miraculous by inference only, not in fact.

Both here, and in the blinding of Elymas (xiii. 8) (as also in the withering of the fig-tree in Mk. xi. 12: *v.* p. 49), we have to make allowance for an idea which was very real to the early Christians, but which has little meaning for ourselves—the idea of the effectiveness of a solemn curse. Not only in Greek literature, but also in the Old Testament, there is ample evidence for this belief.[1] It still persists in many countries; and if the modern Egyptian who thinks himself bewitched falls into a fit, and is in danger of death, we can readily understand how the working of this superstition in a guilty mind might contribute to the tragedy of Ananias and Sapphira.

There is some reason to think that the punishment inflicted by St. Paul on the member of the Corinthian Church who had been guilty of incest ('to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,' 1 Cor. v. 5), was also of this kind.[2]

[1] *v.* von Dobschütz, *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, p. 390.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 46.

(3) The *spiriting away of Philip* (viii. 39-40), suggested by Old Testament parallels (*e.g.* 1 Kings xviii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 16, both of Elijah: cp. Bel and the Dragon, 36), only becomes interesting if we suppose that this story rests upon Philip's own evidence (cp. p. 89). We must then either think that Philip really believed himself to have had this experience, or that his account of a spiritual guidance has been materialised in reproduction. The latter is the more likely hypothesis.

(4) The *raising of Dorcas* (ix. 36-43) is evidently an early tradition (what in a Greek state would be called the 'foundation myth') of the Christian community at Joppa, as the story of Æneas is of the church at Lydda. It belongs also to the Petrine cycle of tradition, and is parallel to St. Paul's raising of Eutychus. The story is told with considerable realism and relish (especially ix. 37, 39) by the 'saints and widows' (vs. 41), who were present, or by some who, at least, had it from their friends. St. Luke hears it, some years afterwards, when he is staying at Cæsarea. No one had been present with St. Peter in the death-chamber (vs. 40); no effort was made to prove the fact of death, or its cause (vs. 37), or the nature of the recovery; no pains were taken to exclude the hypothesis of catalepsy. The least that one can say is that the evidence for a miracle is weak and insufficient. Comparing it with analogous cases we shall probably conclude that St. Luke has once more accepted a miraculous account of what was an unusual but natural event.

(5) *The deliverance of St. Peter from prison* is marked, like some other stories in the Petrine cycle, by realistic local detail (xii. 6, 10, 13-17), evidently derived from the talk of the 'brethren' at Jerusalem. But this circumstantiality loses force in view of the very similar story (almost certainly a doublet of the present passage, and therefore attributed to B) in v. 17-23. The extreme miraculousness of some of the incidents—the chains falling off from

St. Peter's hands without disturbing the soldiers who lay on each side of him, the unhindered passage through the prison, and the automatic opening of the iron gate—hint that the original experience may have been, as St. Peter thought at first (xii. 9), a vision. What exactly happened, or how the dream became materialised into the present story, we cannot expect to discover at this distance of time. Once more St. Luke shows himself a vivid but a very credulous historian.[1]

(6) In the case of *the death of Herod* (xii. 23), which immediately follows St. Peter's release, and may come from the same source, we are able to compare St. Luke's account with that of another historian, Josephus.[2] The idea that the death was a judgement on Herod for his assumption of divine honours is common to both versions. St. Luke only goes a little further in attributing the sudden illness to a direct act of God. He is reproducing a pious opinion of the Christian community, which does not necessarily imply anything supernatural in the method of God's act of judgement. Herod died of a natural disease: *i.e* there was no miracle.

Thus A is good evidence that among the traditions of the Church in Judæa were certain stories of miracles; but there is no sufficient ground for thinking that these were more than misinterpretations of natural events.

(vi)

B contains only two incidents that bear on the question of miracles—the phenomena of the Day of Pentecost, and the deliverance of the apostles from prison.

1. Even if we take ii. 1-13 as an authentic account of the *Day of Pentecost*, the manifestation 'as of wind' and 'as of fire' is a spiritual phenomenon. Something is heard,

[1] There are curious parallels to this story in the miracles of St. Thomas of Canterbury (Abbott, vol. i. p. 55), and of St. William of Norwich (Jessopp and James, pp. 198, 256).

[2] *Ant.* xix. 8, 2.

something seen: it is inadequately described under the forms of wind and fire. When we remember how constantly wind and fire are taken as the emblems of divine presence and power in the Old Testament (*e.g.* 1 Kings xix. 11; Exod. iii. 2), we shall be inclined to think that such preconceptions determined the form of this passage, and perhaps affected the matter of it as well. But there is the further consideration, that ii. 1-13 may be a later recension of an original Pentecost tradition, which underlies iv. 23-31. The 'sound as of wind' may represent the ecstatic 'shaking'; the 'tongues as of fire' may point to such an appearance of lights as sometimes accompanies revivalist meetings. The likelihood of some such development of the story is increased by the survival of two distinct theories as to the nature of the gift of tongues on this occasion. The incoherent speech of ii. 13, sounding like that of drunken men, excludes B's theory that 'every man heard them speaking in his own language,' and points to the existence of an earlier and truer version of what really occurred—truer, because this agrees with what St. Paul says about the gift of tongues in 1 Cor. xiv. etc., and with the explanation which St. Peter himself gives at the time of the occurrence (ii. 15 f.).[1]

2. B's account of *the deliverance of the apostles from prison* (v. 17 f.) looks very much like a doublet of the similar story in A (xii. 4 f.). It has marks of even greater exaggeration than that passage—'the prison-house shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors,' v. 23—but is much less circumstantial. We have seen no reason to doubt that among the traditions of the Jerusalem Church was a story of an escape of St. Peter from prison. Probably it was told in various ways, two of which have been incorporated by St. Luke.

B's evidence, then, in respect of both these incidents, is of secondary value.

[1] *v.* Bartlet, *Acts*, Appendix C.

(vii)

C, the Jerusalem-Antioch tradition, contains three incidents that must be considered here.

1. St. Paul cures *a lame man at Lystra* (xiv. 8-10).—The only suspicious part of this incident is its close parallelism with St. Peter's healing of a lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple (iii. 1-10). Even the language is in several points identical ('a certain man . . . from his mother's womb . . . fastening his eyes upon him . . . said . . . leaping up . . . walk (walked) . . . saw'). Assimilation of some kind has probably taken place here. But there is no reason to doubt that similar incidents had occurred in the experience of both apostles.

2. *The blinding of Elymas* (xiii. 8-12).—The authority for the incident that underlies this story was possibly St. Mark, and of St. Mark's attitude towards miracles we have already formed some opinion. But St. Luke's peculiar point of view has also affected the narrative; first, by making St. Paul's dealings with Elymas the sorcerer outrival those of St. Peter with Simon the sorcerer (viii. 18-24), and secondly, by bringing out the dramatic contrast between St. Paul, who had once been blinded himself, but is now 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' and Elymas, 'full of all guile and of all villainy,' struck blind, and 'not seeing the sun for a season.' Further, as Prof. Ramsay points out,[1] it was probably in St. Luke's mind that the contest between St. Paul and Elymas stood for the struggle between Christianity and Oriental religion for the mastery of the Roman world. When weight is given to all these considerations, and to the belief in the validity of cursing, as already mentioned in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (p. 125), it does not seem improbable that some temporary affection of the eyes (notice, 'for a season,' vs. 11) should have been taken as a judgement upon the unbeliever, and transformed into a miracle.

[1] *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 77 f

3. St. Paul's *recovery from stoning* (xiv. 19-20) is stated in such a way as neither to necessitate nor to exclude a miracle. St. Luke himself inclines to the former view (*e.g.* ' supposing that he was dead '). That the severity of St. Paul's injuries is exaggerated appears from the circumstance (which is taken by St. Luke as a corroboration of the miracle) that ' on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe.' The curious thing is that St. Luke should be content to leave the incident as it stands, without making any attempt to clear up its meaning. The reason is simply that it did not occur to him that anybody would question the facts, or doubt the likelihood of a miracle. He and his contemporaries expected such events to accompany the preaching of the Gospel. Where tradition said that they had occurred, he accepted the tradition. But they were not of sufficient importance, individually, to need evidential or even accurate statement.

It is this point of view, necessarily so different from our own, that mediates the whole miraculous element in the Acts.

(viii)

The healing of Saul's blindness (ix. 17-19) by the imposition of Ananias's hands is described in what is possibly medical but certainly unscientific language: ' there fell from his eyes as it were scales.' The spiritual crisis is the essential matter, both in St. Paul's blinding, and in his recovery. It was accompanied with physical changes, not merely coincident, but consequential, as is the fashion in some strongly emotional temperaments. On such lines, at any rate, the incidents of the conversion seem to be most capable of explanation.

The Ascension (i. 9) is probably, as has been frequently suggested, a more developed version of the story of the parting at Bethany on the evening of the Resurrection appearances (Lk. xxiv. 50-51). In the original incident there was no physical levitation.

(ix)

With these two incidents from the unclassified sources of Acts we conclude this part of our inquiry, and may attempt to sum up its results.

They fall under three heads.

1. First, the whole of the evidence contained in the Acts comes to us through the medium of a very definite personality and point of view. Never was material more thoroughly edited than in this book. Never did historian impress himself more upon his work. St. Luke had the supreme historical faculty of being able to see the relation of each part of his narrative to the general scheme. Instead of 'failing to see the wood for the trees,' he picked out just such trees as seemed to him to make an ideal wood. In effect, he tried to do for the history of the Early Church what the author of the fourth Gospel did for the life of its Founder. If the results were less radical, it was because he was much nearer to the historical events that he described, and the *prima facie* contrast between the facts and the interpretation of them was much less serious. Yet it remains true that his work is primarily dramatic rather than historical. Everything turns on the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit, which suggests, directs, and controls each step in the development of the story. And the attitude towards miracles, in particular, depends primarily upon the idea that they are a normal expression of this indwelling, energising Spirit. St. Luke does not invent miracles. But sometimes he turns a doubtful into a certain claim. Sometimes he gives fresh emphasis to a miraculous story. And always, so far as we can tell, he welcomes accounts of miraculous events, and gives them a prominent place in his narrative.

2. Thinking as he does about miracles, St. Luke takes no special precautions to test his sources, or to verify his evidence. So long as he is relying upon his own reminiscences, or upon the information of men who are friends of

himself and fellow-travellers of St. Paul, he finds little to report that does not admit of a natural explanation. But he is supremely conscious of the spiritual agency that underlies St. Paul's missionary journeys; he knows of visions, and voices, and prophetic forebodings; and he is thus ready to credit stories which he cannot prove. It is therefore not surprising that, when we pass from the later to the earlier part of Acts, and from matters of better to matters of worse evidence, the quality and quantity of miraculous incidents show a marked advance.[1] Village or church traditions of uncertain origin take the place of well-authenticated travel-stories. We are moving on the confines, at any rate, of a region of legends and myths.

3. There is no reason to doubt—indeed, there is every reason to suppose—that the spiritual fervour of the early Christian community gave its members special powers of insight, and utterance, and healing by the appeal to faith. But when due allowance has been made, on the lines just stated, for exaggerations due to St. Luke himself or to his witnesses, there probably remains little or nothing in the spiritual phenomena of the Early Church which cannot be paralleled in the history of religion, either at the great centres of faith-healing, or in times of revivalism and mission preaching.

[1] This general conclusion would hold even if Harnack's apportionment of the 'sources' of the earlier chapters of the book were not accepted.

NOTE ON SOME POINTS IN THE PARALLELISM BETWEEN 'ACTS OF PETER' AND 'ACTS OF PAUL' (*v.* p. 124)

	St. Peter.	St. Paul.
First cure, a man lame from birth,	iii. 2.	xiv. 8.
A sick man cured,	ix. 33.	xxviii. 8.
Many cures (direct),	v. 16.	xxviii. 9.
,, ,, (indirect),	v. 15.	xix. 12.
'Signs and wonders,'	ii. 43, v. 12.	xiv. 3, xv. 12.
Raising the dead,	ix. 36.	xx. 9.
Punitive miracles,	v. 1.	xiii. 6.
Deliverance from prison,	v. 19, xii. 6.	xvi. 25.
Gift of Holy Ghost imparted,	viii. 14.	xix. 1.
Dealings with a sorcerer,	viii. 18-24.	xiii. 8-12.
Vision corresponding to one seen by another person,	x. 1.	ix. 3.
Refusal of divine honours,	x. 25.	xiv. 11.

CHAPTER IX

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

(i)

We have hitherto excluded from our consideration the miracles which mark the beginning and the end of the Gospel. Textually, this can be justified on the ground that the narratives of the birth and childhood of Jesus are an appendix to the Synoptic tradition, and that, either by accident or by artifice, the canonical edition of Mk. lacks his account of the Appearances after the Resurrection. There is a further reason for treating the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection separately. All the miracles which we have hitherto examined were worked *through* Jesus or His disciples; these two were worked *upon* Him. The disproof of the former need not condemn the latter, any more than the proof of the latter need accredit the former. Each case demands separate inquiry.

It is important that we should be quite clear as to the point at issue. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth, as commonly understood, is one which entirely excludes a human father's share in the birth of Jesus Christ. This is the view expressly stated in Mt. i. 18-25, where the work of the Holy Spirit is not co-operative with that of a human father, but takes its place. It is the more necessary to make this point clear, because a birth might still be called supernatural in which the divine power acted either through, or in co-operation with, a human

parent. This may even turn out to be the view taken by the earliest Christian tradition. It is not, however, the view of Mt., and it has not been the theory accepted by the Church, which has preferred to regard human and divine fatherhood as incompatible with one another.

In dealing with the Virgin Birth we shall follow our usual method, and examine the evidence bit by bit, in chronological order. For it is a great mistake to suppose that there is no evidence on this subject outside the narratives in Mt. i.-ii. and Luke i.-ii.

(ii)

The Evidence of St. Paul

We have already described the main characteristics of St. Paul's letters. Although he writes within twenty-seven years of the Crucifixion, Jesus has already become for him the centre of a theology, and little interest is shown in the historical facts of the Incarnation behind the Passion and the Resurrection. It is therefore not surprising to find that St. Paul makes no explicit mention whatever of a Virgin Birth.

To argue from this silence that the Virgin Birth never happened would be to argue that Jesus' Galilean ministry never happened, which would be absurd. But to argue that St. Paul did not know about the Virgin Birth would be to argue that he did not know (in any detail) about the ministry ; and that is quite credible.

But we cannot leave the matter here. The significance of St. Paul's silence must be interpreted through its connection with other considerations. And the most important of these is St. Paul's own *indirect* evidence on the point. He is by no means a silent witness. When it is said, 'What we can maintain with great boldness is that St. Paul's conception of the "Second

Adam" postulates His miraculous birth,'[1] an inquiry is suggested into the real meaning of the passages to which reference is made. Let us examine the facts.

1. Gal. iv. 4, 'God sent forth His Son, born of a woman (*γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός*), born under the law.' That means just 'a human child, a Jewish child.' The emphasis is on the human and natural limitation, not on any special manner of birth.[2] And that is because no special manner of birth is implied. The phrase would naturally be taken to mean an ordinary human birth (cf. 'man that is born of a woman,' Job xiv. 1; 'among them that are born of women,' Mt. xi. 11=Lk. vii. 28). Further, the words 'sent forth,' being subsequent in time to 'born' (as the tense shows), not previous to it, cannot mean 'sent into the world from outside.'

2. Rom. i. 3-4, 'His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.' Here the contrast obviously lies between the human birth of Jesus and His divine re-birth at the Resurrection, between the sonship of David which He got through human parentage, and the divine sonship which was given to Him by the power of God (cf. 2 Tim. ii. 8, 'Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my Gospel'; Heb. vii. 14, 'it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah'). This belief in the Davidic descent of Christ, recurring in the genealogies in Mt. and Lk., was part of the Church tradition which St. Paul received and handed on. His statement of it is more than negative evidence; he could hardly have written so if he had believed in a Virgin Birth.

3. 1 Cor. xv. 47, 'The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven.' The argument of the whole chapter shows that this refers not to the Incarnation, but

[1] Bishop Gore, *Dissertations* (new edition), p. 11.

[2] 1 Cor. vii. 34 shows clearly the sense in which St. Paul uses the word *γυναικός*.

to the Resurrection. It is the new body of Jesus' Resurrection which is contrasted with the old body of Adam, that is, of His and our humanity. There is no reference to the birth of Christ.

4. Of our author's other quotations, two (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. v. 12-21) illustrate the Adam-Christ doctrine, but throw no light on the Virgin Birth. The third (1 Tim. ii. 5, 'one mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus') suggests—if anything—a human birth. Thus it appears that the real inference to be drawn from these chosen passages is the very opposite to that which is suggested.

One might add, from the same central body of evidence, four other passages which bear the same sense—Rom. viii. 3, 'God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh'; Rom. v. 15, 'the one man, Jesus Christ'; Rom. ix. 5, 'Israelites . . . of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh'; and 1 Cor. xv. 21, 'by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.'

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that St. Paul's silence about the Virgin Birth is due to the fact that he held a doctrine inconsistent with Mt. i. 18-25, though not inconsistent with the supernatural origin of Christ—that he believed that Jesus was born of human parentage.

It is not on evidential grounds that people will dispute this conclusion, but because they do not see how to reconcile it with St. Paul's exalted Christology. But, if the evidence is worth anything, St. Paul did so reconcile it. Perhaps the difficulty, to St. Paul's mind, would rather have been to accommodate his Jewish monotheism to the idea that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.[1] Anyhow, he wrote at a time when the feeling of incongruity between human and divine which gave rise to Mt. i. 18-25 was not yet in existence, and when, *just because He had a Davidic parentage, Jesus could be spoken of as divine.* Even for ourselves, perhaps, the difficulty lies not

[1] Lk. i. 35. Cp. Soltau, *The Birth of Jesus Christ*, p. 21.

in the nature of things, but in our failure to grasp the true problem of the Incarnation. We think it easier to speak of Christ as 'perfect God and perfect man,' if at the same time we make large concessions from the side of the humanity: 'He was not born as a man is born; He was not ignorant or imperfect as a man is ignorant or imperfect; He did not die as a man dies.' It may at least be suggested that a humanity which is inhumanly born is not a complete humanity.

(iii)

The Evidence of St. Mark

It is sometimes said that St. Mark, although giving no account of the nativity of Christ, implies the belief in the Virgin Birth. It is commonly assumed that his silence has no evidential value. The real fact is that St. Mark is not silent, and that his evidence is of primary importance.

1. According to Mk. iii. 21, Jesus' relatives (this is probably the meaning of *οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ*), who, one would naturally suppose, knew of His miraculous birth, regarded the opening of His ministerial work not as the natural sequel of that unique beginning, but as a sign of madness: 'they went out to lay hold of Him: for they said, He is beside Himself.' Further, according to Mk. iii. 31-35, Jesus' own mother (who at any rate must have known the facts), together with His brothers, came on (what is implied to be) a similar errand. Nor does Jesus in any way deny the full relationship. The force of His aphorism about spiritual kinship depends on the reality of the human kinship which He at once acknowledges and rejects.

2. Mk. vi. 1-6 describes a visit of Jesus to 'His own country,' that is, as the mention of 'the synagogue' shows, to His own village, Nazareth (cf. Lk. iv. 16). Here He is well known as 'the carpenter, the Son of Mary'[1];

[1] 'Since parentage in Palestine was always reckoned (and expressed) from the father, it may be argued with much probability that

His brothers are named—'James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon'; His sisters are still living in the village. As before, Jesus never thinks of denying the ordinary meaning of these relationships. He acknowledges 'His own kin, His own house.' The essence of the incident is His disappointment at finding that physical kinship does not imply spiritual sympathy. It is not too much to say that the story would lose most of its point, and could not possibly have been told as it has been, if the narrator had known anything about the Virgin Birth.

3. In Jesus' interpretation of Psalm cx. (Mk. xii. 35-37= Mt. xxii. 41-46=Lk. xx. 41-44) the antithesis seems to lie between His human descent from David and His Messianic superiority to David. He does not wish to deny the former; nor is the psalm directed against the errors of the Ebionites.[1] His point is that David himself foresaw the Messianic glory of his descendant, and called Him Lord as certainly as he knew Him to be his son. Here again, then, Jesus assumes the reality of that human parentage on which His Davidic descent relies. His spiritual superiority is not an objection to His Davidic descent, but a corollary of it.

Thus it appears that on three separate occasions (and there are no others) when Jesus, according to the earliest Gospel, spoke about His birth, He used language naturally compatible with human parentage, and not naturally compatible with anything else. This is what is generally dismissed as an 'argument from silence.'

Mark's ὁ υἱὸς τῆς Μαρίας implies either the death of Joseph or, more naturally, an allusion to the supernatural circumstances of the birth of Jesus' (Allen, *St. Matthew*, p. 156). The second alternative seems to be quite excluded by the whole attitude of the Nazarenes towards Jesus. Who would allude to the miraculous birth of somebody *as a reason for not believing in him*? It is at least possible that the phrase is meant as an insult, implying that Jesus' father was unknown. This is much more suitable to the circumstances, and to the people to whom the words are attributed.

[1] *Epistle of Barnabas*, ch. xii. (cp. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 393, and Menzies, *Earliest Gospel, ad loc.*).

The fact is, of course, that St. Mark, far from believing in the Virgin Birth, presents an earlier and alternative theory to account for the 'divine sonship' of Jesus. It was at His Baptism, according to this primitive tradition, that Jesus 'saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased' (Mk. i. 10-11). It is only the survival of this story in Mt. and Lk. alongside of their new narratives of the Nativity which obscures the fact that we are here dealing with alternate (though not necessarily incompatible) theories. The fourth Gospel is more logical. Having yet another theory—that of the pre-existent Word of God—it omits both the Baptism and the Virgin Birth.

Behind all these theories lies the experience which, according to its different lights, each generation of Christians tried to explain, that Jesus was more than an ordinary man.

(iv)

The Evidence of Q

Harnack thus reconstructs that part of Q which touches on the Baptism of Jesus: 'Q then probably proceeded to narrate the Baptism of our Lord, together with the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven, by which He was marked off as the Son of God (the Messiah) in the sense of Psalm ii. 7. The use here made of the word from the Psalm excludes all ideas of pre-existence and of a miraculous birth.'[1] And he adds this comment: 'The idea that Jesus was endowed with the Messiahship at the Baptism had, as St. Mark shows, already taken form in the Apostolic age, and in the circle of the immediate disciples—how early we do not know. . . . The view indeed which preceded it, according to which Jesus was declared by God to be the Messiah by an act of glorification, is an idea

[1] *The Sayings of Jesus*, p. 235.

which had already completely lost its significance for St. Mark, while St. Matthew and St. Luke knew no more of it than what they read in St. Mark.' [1]

Another passage in Q—the Baptist's question about Jesus' Messiahship (Mt. xi. 2 f.=Lk. vii. 18 f.)—is hard to reconcile, at any rate, with Lk.'s story of the Birth, as generally interpreted. For the Baptist could hardly have been in ignorance of the circumstances narrated in Lk. i.-ii., or have failed to see in them evidence for Jesus' Messiahship.

In Q, then, as in Mk., we are dealing with an age that has not yet begun to think of the Virgin Birth. The point of contact between the Christ of religious experience and the Christ of history is already being pushed back from the Resurrection to the Baptism. It has further yet to go—to the Birth, in Mt. and Lk., and to the pre-existence of God, in the fourth Gospel.

(v)

The Evidence of Acts

The early chapters of Acts can hardly be regarded as evidence of the first rank. They are the result of a historical reconstruction, which, however skilfully it may have been done, can hardly have escaped some colouring from later ideas (cf. p. 119). Nevertheless, there is a feeling of primitiveness in the theology of these chapters which is, if nothing more, a triumph of archæology.

1. In Acts ii. 25 f. (St. Peter's speech on the Day of Pentecost), after quoting Psalm xvi. 8-11, the apostle explains the prediction thus: 'Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins (ἐκ καρποῦ τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ) he would set One upon his throne; he [*i.e.* David] foreseeing

[1] *The Sayings of Jesus*, p. 246.

this spake of the resurrection of the Christ.' It would be impossible to use plainer language of the physical descent of Christ than this quotation from Psalm cxxxii. 11.

2. Similarly in his address at Antioch (xiii. 23), after speaking of 'David the son of Jesse,' St. Paul says, 'Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.' St. Paul is here entirely at one with St. Peter. His more advanced soteriology is equally compatible with the human birth of the Saviour.

3. In the same speech (xiii. 33) St. Paul is represented as quoting the Messianic words, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee' (Psalm ii. 7), not, as they are quoted in the Gospels, in connection with Jesus' Baptism, still less with His Nativity, but with His Resurrection. This—as we have seen, the earliest—theory of the divinity of Christ is the commonest in the early chapters of Acts. But the first alternative theory also appears, that Jesus became Christ by the anointing of Baptism (iv. 27, x. 38). Moreover, Acts i. 22, x. 37 entirely agree with the Synoptic tradition in making the baptism of John the starting-point of the Gospel; and 'Jesus of Nazareth' is the title used in Acts iii. 6, iv. 10, vi. 14, x. 38, xxii. 8, and xxvi. 9.

4. The special notice taken of the presence of 'Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brethren' (i. 14) as next in honour to the apostles and the faithful women, together with the high position assumed by James, the Lord's brother, at Jerusalem (xv. 13; a stranger fact than it is generally taken to be), indicates a consideration shown to Jesus' relations which is at least harder to explain if those who showed and received it knew the real nature of the relationship. This should be compared with Hegesippus's story of the grandchildren of Judas, the Lord's brother, who were brought before the Emperor Domitian, and who subsequently held high preferments in the Church, *ὡς ἂν δὴ μάρτυρας ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ γένους ὄντας τοῦ* Κυρίου—'for the

witness they gave, and because they were of the family of the Lord.'[1]

The argument from Acts is, like that from Mk., not merely an '*argumentum ex silentio*.' The speeches of the early chapters of the book, with their plain language about the Davidic descent of Jesus, could hardly have been made or reported by believers in a Virgin Birth.

A curious problem is raised by the consideration that Acts, which takes this view, is by the same author as the third Gospel, which includes the story of the Nativity. (A similar question is, of course, suggested by the insertion of the genealogy in Lk. iii. 23 f.; *v.* p. 155.) If Lk. i.-ii. describes a Virgin Birth, it is difficult to suppose that St. Luke would carry his archaism to such extremes as to make no reference to so important a belief in passages like Acts xiii. 33. The alternative is to regard either Lk. i.-ii. as a whole, or such parts of these chapters as involve the idea of a Virgin Birth as a later addition to the Gospel, and as not known to St. Luke when he wrote Acts. This is the point that we have next to discuss. In any case, the paradox of Acts, coming as it does upon the top of the significant evidence of St. Paul and St. Mark, presses for a solution.

(vi)

The Evidence of St. Luke

It will be well to begin with *the evidence of Lk. outside chapters i.-ii.* And here the remarkable fact at once appears, that there is nothing in Lk., apart from chapters i.-ii., which could by any possibility suggest the idea of a Virgin Birth. If, by an accident, these two chapters had been lost, it would never have occurred to any one that they were missing. The Gospel makes a fresh and formal beginning in iii. 1. Not only so. The Baptism and Trans-

[1] Euseb. *H.E.* iii. 20. For the δεσπόσυνοι, collateral descendants of Christ in the time of Origen, cp. Bacon in *Hastings' D.B.* ii. 138.

figuration, with the old declaration of Messianic Sonship, are still repeated from Mk., although, *ex hypothesi*, a new theory has been given which completely alters their meaning. A special case is supplied by St. Luke's version of the visit to Nazareth (Mk. vi. 1=Lk. iv. 16=Mt. xiii. 53). In reporting the scornful questions of the Nazarenes he omits all mention of Jesus' trade, and of His mother and brethren ; but (lest we should think that he does this through his belief in the Virgin Birth) instead of ' Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary ? ' he puts ' Is not this Joseph's son ? ' The change may possibly be due to abbreviation, or to a desire to avoid the latent insult of Mk.'s phrase (p. 138 *n.*). But in any case it is extraordinary that St. Luke should have deliberately expressed himself so. It is not that he leaves unexplained the villagers' mistake. The mistake is not there, in Mk. St. Luke puts it into their mouths. Again, it is sometimes said that St. Luke could speak of Jesus as ' Joseph's son ' without prejudice to the Virgin Birth, because he had already described the latter quite clearly in chapters i.-ii. But, even so, he would not go out of his way, as he does here, to introduce such an inconsistency. And the argument relies on what is (as we shall see) just the uncertain element in the problem, whether Lk. i.-ii. does or does not describe a Virgin Birth at all. If Lk. i.-ii. were found not to necessitate any such doctrine, we should be forced to what is, after all, the most obvious conclusion, that St. Luke wrote ' Joseph's son ' because he believed that Jesus was the son of Joseph.

Let us next consider the question of the *authenticity of Lk. i.-ii.*

1. The first point to notice is that these chapters rest upon the same MSS. authority as the rest of the Gospel. That is to say, we have no external evidence for following the hint of iii. 1, and regarding all that precedes as a prologue, added at a later date, or by a different author, and not as a constituent part of the Gospel.

2. Secondly, these chapters show a marked continuity of style and language with the rest of the Gospel. The evidence for this may be found in detail in Harnack's *Luke the Physician*, pp. 96-105, 199-218, and Sir John Hawkins's *Horae Synopticae*, second edition, p. 24. There can be no reasonable doubt of its sufficiency. Yet it may be suggested that the continuity of language is really less complete than it appears to be, because, comparatively speaking, there are fewer peculiar words in Lk. i.-ii., and they are used more frequently, than in the rest of the Gospel.

There is, too, some ground for thinking that the peculiar words sometimes belong not so much to St. Luke as to some source that he used for chapters i.-ii. It may be that these chapters are more independent than is generally allowed.[1]

3. As regards the existence and nature of any such source, critics are divided. Those who wish to show that the birth-narrative rests on good authority believe that St. Luke reproduced, with little or no alteration, an early Aramaic document. Those who take a more radical view deny the use of any written authorities. The safest analogy is the one which St. Luke himself provides in the early chapters of Acts. There he is manifestly using authorities, some of which may have been documentary.

[1] Thus 77 out of the 151 words and phrases characteristic of Lk. (the figures are Sir John Hawkins's) occur in Lk. i.-ii., but 74 do not. In other peculiar portions of Lk., 136 of these 151 are present, and only 15 absent. Again, the number of verses in Lk. i.-ii. (132) is one-ninth of the whole Gospel; but the number of peculiar words found in these verses is one-seventh of the whole number. Again, if the use of the peculiar words be followed out, it appears that many of them are not so much peculiar to Luke as peculiar to these two chapters. Each of the following fractions represents one such word: the top figure gives the number of times it occurs in Lk. i.-ii., the middle figure the number of times it occurs in Lk. as a whole, and the lower figure the number of times it occurs in Acts.

4/	5/	3/	5/	4/	4/	5/	8/	3/	4/	3/	4/	3/
5/	6/	5/	7/	5/	7/	7/	13/	5/	7/	4/	7/	4/
1	0	1	2	5	7	1	9	1	4	6	2	0

Yet the language is thoroughly his own—and, not least, that part of it which is archaic. So here the archaic and poetical tone of the language is not more than a skilful writer, with the help (perhaps) of a few documents, could achieve, especially if (as is almost certain) St. Luke had lived for some time among Jewish Christians of the old-fashioned type, when he visited Jerusalem at the end of the last missionary journey.

4. In looking for St. Luke's sources of information we notice that there are two centres of interest in these chapters—Jesus Himself and John. It does not follow that St. Luke was drawing on two groups of tradition : for there is a parallelism and balance of parts throughout which rather suggest a single source, and the poetical elements and angelic appearances are evenly distributed over the whole. If there was a single source, we shall probably be right in connecting it with the family or disciples of the Baptist, rather than with those of Jesus. Otherwise it is difficult to account both for the obscurity of the stories until a relatively late date, and for the prominence which they give to the secondary and, from a later Christian point of view, unnecessary figure of the Baptist himself.

Lk. ii. should next be examined, *apart from Lk. i.* This chapter contains the account of the Nativity, of the experience of the shepherds, of the various circumstances relating to the Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple, and of the Visit to Jerusalem. If these incidents are the natural sequel of an announcement of a Virgin Birth in chapter i., we shall expect to find them described in language which is, at least, consistent with that. What we do find, as a matter of fact, is very different. In ii. 18 Joseph and Mary are included in the statement that ' all that heard ' the shepherds' report of the angelic message ' wondered at the things which were spoken unto them.' Again in ii. 33 they ' were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him ' by Simeon. And again in

ii. 50 ' they understood not the saying which He spake unto them.' This failure to expect or understand unusual circumstances surrounding the youth of one miraculously announced and conceived is, at least, curious. When it is added that Mary ' kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart ' (ii. 19), or ' kept all these sayings in her heart ' (ii. 51), the meaning is surely not that she understood them because she knew of the Virgin Birth, but that they puzzled her because she knew of nothing to account for them, and that she only came to understand their meaning in the light of later events.

Again, throughout the chapter, Joseph and Mary are spoken of as the parents of the child—ii. 27 ' the parents ' ; ii. 33 (even more explicitly) ' His father and His mother ' ; ii. 41 ' His parents ' ; ii. 43 the same ; and in ii. 48 Mary herself says, ' Thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.'

Why does ii. 22 speak of ' the days of *their* purification ' ? It probably means that both Joseph and Mary are regarded as needing purification. (Both are included in Simeon's blessing, ii. 34 ; both carry out the ceremonies of the occasion, ii. 39, ' they . . . they . . . their.') It is difficult to see how this can be reconciled with the strict interpretation of ii. 5, ἐμνηστευμένῃ—betrothed, but not married. Yet it is the latter expression, not the former, which is most out of harmony with the general tone of the chapter.

What inference can be drawn from the Presentation in the Temple (ii. 22-39) ? The present ceremony of the Redemption of the First-born (Exod. xiii. 13) includes a declaration on the part of the father that the child is his first-born son, and an acknowledgment of the obligation to redeem him.[1] But it is not certain that this custom held in Joseph's time. And, in any case, a man who chose to assume legal parentage could probably perform the act as well as a natural father. In Dalman's opinion, ' if no other human fatherhood was alleged, then the child must have been regarded as bestowed by God upon the

[1] Oesterley and Box, *Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, p. 410.

house of Joseph, for a betrothed woman, according to Israelitish law, already occupied the same status as a wife.'[1] If St. Luke shared this view, he *may* have had it in mind throughout the chapter; but it remains extraordinary that he should express himself so: it is at best a precarious solution of the difficulty.[2]

There is, finally, the incident in ii. 48-50. The point of Jesus' answer to Mary lies in the contrast between the claims of His heavenly Father and of His earthly father. In view of the Virgin Birth the words lose all point, and it becomes incredible that Joseph and Mary 'understood not the saying which He spake unto them.'

It appears, then, that the natural sense of Lk. ii., so far from necessitating the Virgin Birth, rather excludes it. It can only be interpreted conformably to that doctrine by the difficult supposition (which is not in any way suggested by the text) that St. Luke speaks throughout not of natural but of legal parentage.

Let us see, however, whether *Lk. i.* so explicitly teaches the Virgin Birth that this must somehow, in spite of appearances to the contrary, be implicit in Lk. ii.

1. A remarkable fact at once appears. The great bulk of Lk. i. makes no more reference to the Virgin Birth than does Lk. ii., or any other part of the Gospel. It may confidently be said that, if two verses, 34 and 35, were removed from the text, there would be no suggestion left of anything but a human birth. There would be two parallel stories of remarkable births—that of John, the unexpected son of Elisabeth's old age, and that of Jesus, the promised son of the betrothed Mary. Both children are promised by Gabriel; both are the special gift of God[3]; both are welcomed with psalms, and

[1] *Words of Jesus*, p. 320.

[2] Acknowledgment must be made of a letter from Mr. Box on the subject; cf. Edersheim, *Life and Times*, i. p. 195 *n.*

[3] The two births are compared, without any sense of disproportion, in i. 36.

are described as 'growing and waxing strong' (i. 80, ii. 40), until the time of their meeting in the desert. Remove verses 34-35, and the story runs straightforwardly and symmetrically throughout the two chapters. The references to the 'parents' fall into place. The surprise of Joseph and Mary at the circumstances surrounding the birth comes into line with the nature of the Annunciation. Mary's expectation that these strange sayings and doings will some day be explained corresponds with the form of the angel's message in i. 32-33.

2. Verses 34-35, then, introduce an extraneous idea into these two chapters, and one which is not required, but is rather repudiated, by the Gospel as a whole. We can put the case more strongly. Even verse 35 is not inconsistent with human parentage, unless 'Son of God' be taken in a quite unnatural sense. It is, of course, a title of the Messiah. But nobody expected that the Messiah would be miraculously born. What the angel promises is that the Holy Ghost and the power of the Most High shall so bless Mary's (natural) conception, that the child to be born shall be the long-expected Messiah. Indeed, there is no point in the angel's promise that the child shall inherit 'the throne of His father David,' unless He is to be born of Joseph.[1] This would be the natural interpretation of verse 35, taken by itself, and the one most congenial to Jewish thought.[2] It is only in the light of verse 34 that we have come to give it a different meaning.

3. The crux of the passage, then, is verse 34. And here at once a difficulty occurs. If Mary was already betrothed to Joseph (i. 27), who was of the house of David, why should she be so surprised at being told that she would have a son,

[1] It is significant that the divine visitation does not coincide with the Annunciation (as is generally supposed), but is spoken of as an event in the future (i. 35, corroborated in i. 45). Why is this, unless it be a reference to the marriage, which generally followed betrothal after about a year's interval?

[2] *e.g.* the story of Hannah, 1 Sam. i., and the description of Isaac as 'him that was born after the Spirit' in Gal. iv. 29. Cp. Beeby, *Doctrine and Principles*, p. 125 f.

and that He would inherit 'the throne of His father David'? She might well be startled at the grandeur of the promise. But she could hardly fail to connect the promise with the marriage to which she was looking forward. She does, in fact, suppose that it depends upon her marrying *some one*: that is the force of her question (which comes most strangely after the notice of her betrothal in i. 27), 'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?' (i. 34).

4. We might get over this difficulty by supposing that the notice of the betrothal in i. 27 is premature (and it is repeated, as though mentioned for the first time, in ii. 5). Then Mary's question is intelligible enough. The angelic promise is fulfilled by the subsequent betrothal and marriage to Joseph. Verse 35 can be taken in its natural sense. The idea of a Virgin Birth goes out.

5. But probably the best solution of the difficulties of the passage is to suppose that the four words *ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω*, without which there would be no obscurity, and no suggestion of the Virgin Birth in the Gospel, are either a modification of St. Luke's source, introduced by the Evangelist himself, as editor, or a later addition to the text of Lk. by some person or congregation who wished to make the miracle quite clear. There is little textual authority for doubting the words.[1] But we know that editorial modifications are a common feature of the Gospel. And we have no reason, unfortunately, to suppose that even the best texts which we possess are free from interpolations.[2]

6. The traditional interpretation of the passage fails, in any case, to meet three difficulties—first, the obscurity of Mary's question in verse 34; secondly, the nature of the angelic promise in verses 31-33; and thirdly, the general consistency of the language throughout these chapters (not to mention the rest of the Gospel) with a natural birth.

This last point is, perhaps, the most cogent. The surer

[1] *v.* Loisy, *E.S.* i. 293. [2] Cp. Loisy, *E.S.* i. 286 f.

we are that these chapters are meant to be a narrative of a miraculous birth, the stranger it becomes that they should have been written in such a way as to throw doubt upon their own essential meaning. On the other hand, granted the growth of a later belief in the Virgin Birth, what would be more natural than, by a slight alteration, to accommodate the earlier traditions of a natural birth to the later hypothesis of a miracle ?

(vii)

The Evidence of St. Matthew

Following the plan already adopted in the case of St. Luke, let us consider first the evidence of *Mt. apart from chapters i.-ii.* The same general remark applies to Mt. as to Lk. Apart from the first two chapters, there is nothing in the Gospel which could possibly suggest the idea of the Virgin Birth, and a good deal that goes against it. If we take the same special case as before, we find that, in his editing of St. Mark's story of the visit to Nazareth (Mk. vi. 1=Mt. xiii. 53=Lk. iv. 16), St. Matthew, like St. Luke, pays no regard to the meaning of his first two chapters. It is true that he omits the words ' and among his own kin ' (xiii. 57). But, by changing ' the carpenter ' into ' the carpenter's son,' he shows what his true motive is. What he objects to is that Jesus should be referred to as an artisan, or that He should acknowledge His humble relations. He has no objection to speaking of Him as the son of a human father. The difficulty cannot be solved by saying that St. Matthew is simply reporting a popular misunderstanding. The idea of Joseph's paternity was not present in the story as he found it (Mk. vi. 3) : like St. Luke, he has deliberately inserted it. We have, then, this extraordinary fact to account for, that a writer who has already narrated the Virgin Birth of Christ should, in the only other place in the Gospel where this birth is referred

to, alter the description ' son of Mary ' into ' the carpenter's son.' If Mt. i.-ii. is an original and constituent part of the Gospel, this state of things is very hard to account for. That the same phenomenon should occur in both Gospels increases the strangeness of it. But there is this difference between the two cases. Lk. i.-ii., in its original form, may not have contained the idea of the Virgin Birth; in which case St. Luke's treatment of the episode at Nazareth is natural enough. But there can be no doubt about the meaning of Mt. i.-ii., which teaches the Virgin Birth quite explicitly throughout.

The authenticity of Mt. i.-ii., and its continuity with the rest of the Gospel, is only less well attested than that of Lk. i.-ii. The linguistic evidence [1] shows that the words and phrases which are peculiar to St. Matthew, and which predominate in the passages peculiar to this Gospel, are particularly common in chapters i.-ii. The MSS. evidence for the two chapters is unimpeachable. As regards St. Matthew's possible sources of information, we may call one personal (as though from Joseph's point of view), and the other official (the point of view of a spectator at Jerusalem). The first group of traditions is strongly marked by the belief in angelic appearances: both look for the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in the smallest circumstances of the narrative.

Mt. ii. by itself.

1. ii. 1 begins the story afresh (cf. Lk. ii. 1) as though chapter ii. came from a different source from chapter i. If there is not the same repetition and reintroduction of people and places as in Lk. ii. 1, that is because (oddly enough) there is no mention in Mt. i. of the scene or date of the Nativity which it describes.

2. Bethlehem is the birthplace (ii. 1), but nothing is said of the census which, according to St. Luke, led to the

[1] Hawkins, *Horæ Synopticæ*, second edition, p. 9.

temporary residence there of Joseph and Mary. On the contrary, ii. 11 represents Mary and the child (Joseph is not mentioned) as living in 'the house,' not lodging at an inn. The betrothal (i. 18) and marriage (i. 24) have taken place (it is assumed) at Bethlehem. The house is Joseph's. It is to Judæa (*i.e.* to Bethlehem) that Joseph is anxious to return from Egypt (ii. 22). That is his home. He comes to Nazareth as a stranger (ii. 23), in fulfilment of a prophecy. The point of Herod's edict (ii. 16) is that the child to be killed is the son, not of passing travellers, but of parents who had been living at Bethlehem for at least two years—though it is not clear from ii. 13-16 whether the flight to Egypt was supposed to have taken place some time before the massacre of the children, or immediately preceding it. St. Matthew, then, is quite at variance with St. Luke as to the home of Joseph and Mary, and as to the circumstances under which the birth took place.

3. The flight into Egypt (Mt. ii. 13) is quite incompatible with St. Luke's chronology, according to which the Circumcision took place eight days after the Nativity, the Purification and Presentation on the fortieth day, at Jerusalem, and the return to Nazareth immediately afterwards (Lk. ii. 21, 22, 39).

4. The massacre of the children (Mt. ii. 16-18) belongs, as we have seen, to St. Matthew's theory that Bethlehem was the home of Joseph and Mary. The fear of Herod, and the secrecy of the flight, are inconsistent with the open visit to Jerusalem, and the publicity given to the circumstances of the birth by the shepherds at Bethlehem, as well as by Simeon and Anna at Jerusalem (Lk. ii. 17-20, 25-35, 38). Further, on St. Luke's showing, there could have been no difficulty in discovering which child ought to be killed.

5. Herod died in B.C. 4. By that date, according to St. Luke, the Holy Family had been living at Nazareth for some time. Joseph's wish to return to Judæa, his fear of Archelaus, and his settlement in Nazareth

as a new home, are all incompatible with St. Luke's narrative.

What is the explanation of these difficulties? It is clear that St. Matthew's account of the matter is not the same as St. Luke's. On a number of important points we have to choose between them, or to reject them both. It is tempting to look for the reason of St. Matthew's divergencies in the prophecies which he attaches to the turning-points of his narrative. The home at Bethlehem, the flight into Egypt, the massacre of the children, and the return to Nazareth—all these circumstances are said to be the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Probably Matthew extracted them from some work on the fulfilment of prophecy in the life of Christ. Are we to infer that they were invented in order to illustrate the predictions? And, if so, shall we find in the form which Mt. gives to the birth itself only a fulfilment of Is. vii. 14?

This would be a rather crude view. The prophecies quoted in Mt. i.-ii. are only part of a large number in this Gospel, and must be taken in connection with the rest. It is, indeed, probable that the form of the prediction has in some cases led to the modification of the corresponding incident, as, for instance, in the statement that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on *two* beasts (Mt. xxi. 7), or that Judas betrayed his Master for 'thirty pieces of silver' (xxvi. 15, xxvii. 3, 9). But it is not true to say that incidents have commonly been invented to satisfy supposed predictions. The parallelism must generally have been suggested by some traditional account of the facts, however much it may have reacted upon the interpretation of the facts afterwards.[1] The comparative frequency of these references in Mt. i.-ii. suggests that St. Matthew's birth-narrative may come (in part at least) from an early work on the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy in the life of Jesus. Such a work might have incorporated a genuine historical tradition. But,

[1] Cp. p. 50.

as things stand, we cannot reconcile St. Matthew's account with St. Luke's, and are driven to choose between them.

Mt. i. is quite explicit as to the Virgin Birth. The story is confined to the proof of that single point, and takes pains to emphasise it (i. 18, 20, 23, 25).[1] In chapter ii. (unlike Lk. ii.) no expressions are used which are inconsistent with the sense of chapter i. (ii. 11, 'the young child with Mary His mother'; ii. 13, 'the young child and His mother'; ii. 20, the same again).

Taking St. Matthew's narrative as a whole, we may notice the following points:

1. In some of its features it belongs to an age that regards angelic visions as a normal means of divine guidance—an idea which is foreign to the Gospels, and which brings us into the Jewish-Christian atmosphere of the early chapters of Acts. The same remark applies to its love of finding Old Testament parallels to the events of the life of Christ (cf. St. Peter's apologetic method in Acts).

2. Nevertheless, as a whole, the story belongs to a comparatively advanced stage in the belief in the Virgin Birth. In St. Luke the interest is primarily historical and personal. In St. Matthew it is mainly dogmatic. There are even signs that an answer is being attempted to definite attacks on the orthodox tradition.[2]

There are good reasons, therefore, for thinking that, as Lk. i.-ii. represents a further stage of inquiry than Mk., so Mt. i.-ii. represents a still later development. In Mk. there is no narrative of the birth. In Lk. there is a natural birth with marvellous accompaniments. In Mt. it has become a definite miracle. The same process is at work here as in the rest of the Gospel narrative. We shall judge of it in the same kind of way.

[1] Yet signs of the older tradition still appear. Joseph is called 'son of David' (with reference to the Davidic descent of Jesus), he is the 'husband' (i. 16, 19), and it is he who gives the name to the Child (i. 20, 25).

[2] Allen, *St. Matthew*, p. 18.

(viii)

Before leaving the evidence of Lk. and Mt., something must be said as to the genealogies incorporated into these Gospels (Lk. iii. 23-38, Mt. i. 1-17).

1. In the first place, the theory, originally propounded in order to harmonise the two genealogies, that Lk.'s table gives the pedigree of Mary, may be definitely given up.[1] Both pedigrees belong to Joseph. They are therefore distinct and strong evidence against any theory of the Nativity which leaves Joseph out of account. 'It is beyond dispute that in the mind of both genealogists Jesus is the son of Joseph.'[2]

2. Secondly, both in Mt. and in Lk., the sources from which the genealogies are taken have been edited from a later point of view. The sources belonged to an age which assumed that Jesus, as Messiah, must be, in an official sense, the Son of David (this is the view generally taken in the Gospels and Acts), and which was concerned with proving His physical descent from David only as a corroboration of His office, and as an argument against the unbelieving Jews. There was no feeling, as yet, that the sonship of David—however literally expressed—was derogatory to the sonship of God. But this point of view could not last long, especially when the Palestinian genealogies obtained currency in the West. The ὡς ἐνομίζετο inserted into Lk. iii. 23 marks the change. So do the curious variants of Mt. i. 16.[3] And the extension of Lk.'s genealogy from Abraham back to Adam, and from Adam to God, is due to the belief that the Gentile as well as the Jew shares in the brotherhood of Christ and in the sonship of God.

3. Behind the time when the genealogies seemed to be an offence to the uniqueness of Christ lay a time when they seemed to be the natural explanation of it. Behind that

[1] Bacon in *Hastings' D.B.* ii. 139.
[2] Lobstein, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, p. 46.
[3] *v.* Loisy, *E.S.* i. 323, 326.

again we come to Jesus Himself, and the early days of the Gospel. Here, although 'Son of David' is an accepted title, no stress is laid upon it, and no argument is drawn from it. The origin of the genealogies 'is certainly later than when Jesus and His immediate followers were doing all in their power to detach current expectation from these externalities, and fix it upon His spiritual Messianic claim—to subordinate the title "Son of David according to the flesh" to that of "Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness" (Rom. i. 3-4).'[1]

The attempt to detach the spiritual greatness of Christ's person from the materialistic miracle by which men have sought to explain it is thus in harmony with the view of Jesus Himself, and of those who knew Him best.

(ix)

The Evidence of St. John

If the second Gospel has not yet reached the stage of thought to which the Virgin Birth belongs, the fourth Gospel has passed beyond it. St. John's doctrine of the Incarnation is not an addition, but an alternative, to the theory of Mt. i.-ii. Two essential elements in that doctrine —the divine pre-existence of the Logos, and His voluntary entrance into the world—would have been damaged by any attempt to combine them with the Virgin Birth. The divinity of Christ does not depend, in St. John's thought, upon any supernatural event in time, whether at birth, or at baptism, or at resurrection. It is an eternal fact, of which the highest events of the Incarnate life are but imperfect revelations.[2]

In the only passage in which St. John says anything about the manner of the Birth (vi. 42, probably reproducing Mk. vi. 3=Mt. xiii. 55=Lk. iv. 22—cf. pp. 137, 143, 150),

[1] Bacon in *Hastings' D.B.* ii. 141.
[2] Cf. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 187.

he reports without comment the Jews' question, 'Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth He now say, I am come down out of heaven?' The misunderstanding which gives point to these words is not concerned with the first part of the saying, but with the second. It is not the idea that Jesus might be sprung from human parents that St. John censures, but the idea that a man could 'come down out of heaven' in any but a spiritual way. St. John's meaning is, in fact, that *spiritual generation is the only real means of birth.* His doctrine of the Incarnation is not inconsistent with the natural birth of the Incarnate. Indeed, it is more in harmony with that than with a miraculous Nativity.[1]

The fourth Gospel, like the Synoptists, preserves another trait of primitive tradition which is very unfavourable to the story of the Virgin Birth—the incredulity of Jesus' brethren (vii. 5).

But there is still more important evidence. We have already seen how, under the influence of Messianic prophecy, the fact of Jesus' birth at Nazareth gives way to the idea that He must have been born at Bethlehem. The belief in the Virgin Birth, though not necessarily (according to our interpretation of Lk. i.-ii.) a corollary of this, is its accompaniment in Mt. i.-ii. It is interesting, therefore, to compare the view of the fourth Gospel on this point. In three passages (i. 46, vii. 41-42, 52) Jesus' Messiahship is called in question, because He was born in Galilee. In another place reference is made to the view (which seems to have been held alternatively to that of the birth in Bethlehem) that the birthplace of the Messiah was to be a secret—'When the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence He is' (vii. 27). The fact that Jesus' birthplace is well known (as He Himself admits—'Ye both know me and know whence I am,' vii. 28) is here the objection to His Messiahship. It is possible to argue, as

[1] Cp. J. Weiss, *Christ—the Beginnings of Dogma*, p. 149.

Wendt does,[1] that the Evangelist 'may have taken the birth at Bethlehem for granted, as a fact well known to Christians through the earlier Gospel writings, and have meant to bring out, by those notices in i. 46, vii. 41, 52, that the usual designation of Jesus as "Jesus of Nazareth" had been a hindrance to the faith of the Jews, who did not know of His birth in Bethlehem.' But it is really rather perverse to suppose that so much turned upon a misunderstanding which the slightest inquiry would have set right. The stumbling-block to Jewish belief was that Jesus had *really* been born at Nazareth. And Jesus Himself, in the fourth Gospel, as elsewhere, speaks of Galilee, not Judæa, as the country of His birth. This is shown by the reappearance of the Synoptic saying, 'a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country' (Mk. vi. 4=Mt. xiii. 57=Lk. iv. 24) in Jn. iv. 44. This passage has been misunderstood, and some commentators have even made it Jesus' own witness to His birth in Judæa. But it is clear that, if the Samaritan episode (iv. 4-43) be taken out of the setting into which it has been forced, iv. 44 follows closely on iv. 3. Owing to Jesus' growing popularity, and therefore danger, in Judæa (iv. 1-2), 'He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee (iv. 3) . . . For Jesus Himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country' (iv. 44). That is to say, Jesus deliberately went to a place where He would be less honoured—His own country, Galilee. When it is added in the next verse (iv. 45) that the Galileans received Him, this unexpected favour is explained by their having 'seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast.'[2]

The fourth Gospel, therefore, would seem to reject the story of the birth at Bethlehem. It probably follows that, since its author uses the Synoptic Gospels, and knows with what ideas this tradition is bound up in Mt. i. and ii., he is also silently rejecting the belief in the Virgin Birth.

[1] *Gospel according to St. John*, p. 30. Cp. Bacon in *Hastings' D.B.* ii. 138.

[2] Cp. Dods in *Expositor's G.T.*, *ad loc.*

(x)

We may sum up the foregoing evidence thus :—

1. St. Paul says nothing about the Virgin Birth : he probably believes that Jesus was born of human parents, and declared to be divine by the Resurrection.

2. St. Mark knows nothing of the Virgin Birth, and probably believes that Jesus was assured of Divine Sonship at His Baptism.

3. Both these views reappear in the early chapters of Acts, which are equally ignorant of the Virgin Birth.

4. St. Luke and St. Matthew, in the body of their Gospels, accept the point of view of St. Mark, as given above. In their treatment of the crucial passage they are more explicit than he is in rejecting the Virgin Birth.

5. Lk. i.-ii. only becomes evidence for a miraculous birth on the strength of a single verse. Either by the transposition of i. 27, which is a doublet of ii. 5, or by the removal of i. 34, which is out of harmony with its context, the whole idea of a miraculous birth would vanish from the Gospel.

6. Mt. i.-ii. explicitly narrates a Virgin Birth ; but doubt is thrown on its evidence by its inconsistency with Lk i.-ii., its use of prophecy, and its lateness and artificiality of tone.

7. The fourth Gospel ignores, if it does not reject, the Virgin Birth.

That is the evidence, judged as fairly as we have been able to judge it. It falls naturally into two classes—first, the positive evidence ; secondly, the negative.

The positive evidence for the fact of a miraculous birth must be pronounced to be exceedingly weak.

The negative evidence—i.e. *the evidence for the existence of views which ignore, exclude, or supplant the Virgin Birth—is very strong.*

We need not infer that St. Matthew's narrative of the Virgin Birth simply grew up out of the theoretical demand for such evidence, or that it was influenced, other than indirectly, by pagan and oriental ideas.[1] But we may fairly conclude that among the mass of tradition which gathered round the life and death of Christ, especially among the congregation at Jerusalem, stories were found which easily lent themselves to a miraculous interpretation.[2] And we may trace the development of such an interpretation by a comparison of the prologues to the first and third Gospels. The primitive view, to which Lk. i.-ii. still bears witness, and which must always be the groundwork of Christian faith, means that *God's supernatural love worked for the salvation of the world through the natural birth of Jesus Christ.* The later view —that He came into life miraculously—adds nothing to the wonder of His coming, or to the value of His life among men. On the contrary, it is a much more wonderful conception that all that was done should have been done by natural means. The suggestion is therefore forced upon us that the idea of a miraculous birth has been a misunderstanding of the truth of the Incarnation.

[1] *v.* Soltau, *op. cit.* p. 34 f.

[2] The silence of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mark, and Q shows that these traditions were of relatively late origin. If Lk. i.-ii. be interpreted as above, they must be subsequent to Luke's visit to Jerusalem at the end of St. Paul's last missionary journey. This would agree with the dogmatic tone noticeable in Mt. i.-ii.

CHAPTER X

THE RESURRECTION

(i)

We are to study the Resurrection simply as a problem in evidence. We are to inquire whether certain events occurred, without raising the question of their religious value. Our inquiry falls into two stages. We have to ask, first, what do the most competent witnesses allege to have happened? and, secondly, is their evidence adequate for the things which they allege? So this investigation, again, is essentially an examination of sources, an attempt to interview witnesses; and our previous experience of some of these will be of great value.

Thus we shall expect to find that the earliest evidence is that of St. Paul; that St. Mark's evidence is the strongest and most original element in the witness of the Gospels, and that it is at its best in dealing with the events of the last week of the ministry; that St. Matthew's and St. Luke's witness is conditioned by their habit of editing Mk., without fresh evidence, according to certain *a priori* tendencies; that, where they are drawing on new sources of information, these are probably (with the exception of Q) less trustworthy than Mk.; and that, although St. John's theology is of high value, the evidence of the fourth Gospel, on primary points of history, is of secondary value.

We shall find that, whilst St. Paul's evidence may well be considered as a whole, that of the Gospels is best dealt

with under two heads—first, the witness to the Empty Tomb, and secondly, the witness to the Appearances after the Resurrection.

(ii)

St. Paul's Evidence

There can be no doubt at all that St. Paul believed that Jesus had risen from the dead; that he regarded this event as the central fact of the Gospel which he preached; and that from the first he made it one of the turning-points of his theological system. But the question has to be raised, what kind of event did he believe the Resurrection to be? And it is obvious that the evidence of the early and authentic group of epistles (1 and 2 Cor., Gal., and Rom.) on this point is of immense importance, not only for St. Paul's belief, but also for that of the whole Church. It will be well to deal rather minutely with the passages which bear on this question.

1. 1 Cor. vi. 14, 'God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us through His power.' The point of the context is Christ's claim over the body of man, as against sins of impurity. So one would expect the words to refer to bodily resurrection. Yet, having put 'the Lord' on one side of the equation, St. Paul puts 'us' on the other, not excluding the raising of the body in either case, but making it incidental to the raising of the person. The unity of Christ and the man, though involving the body ('your bodies are members of Christ,' vi. 15), is a spiritual unity ('he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit,' vi. 17). The resurrection in both cases is essentially a spiritual resurrection. This passage does not deal directly with the question at issue, but it illustrates St. Paul's central thought on the subject.

2. 1 Cor. ix. 1, 'Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord?' This gives another part of the groundwork of St. Paul's thinking. The accepted definition of an apostle was 'one who had seen the Lord.' St. Paul

reckoned his personal experience of Jesus not from any 'knowledge after the flesh' (2 Cor. v. 16), but from the vision on the Damascus road. His Christ was not a person who had lived, but a person who was alive.

3. 1 Cor. xv. This is, of course, the central passage.

(*a*) St. Paul mentions without details, and as unquestioned facts, the Death, Burial, and Resurrection (xv. 3-4).

(*b*) 'He hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures' (xv. 4).

Here the statement of the Resurrection is clear enough, though nothing is said as to its nature; but the words 'on the third day according to the scriptures' raise a curious problem.

It is, of course, possible that 'according to the scriptures' in vs. 4 is an accidental dittography of the same words in vs. 3; in which case the problem falls to the ground. Or again, it might be held that the words refer to the fact of the Resurrection, not to the date of it, which St. Paul established in some other way. But, assuming the ordinary view, that it is for the *date* of the Resurrection that he appeals to scripture, how are we to explain his meaning?

(1) In the first place, there were sayings of Jesus Himself which St. Paul might very well have quoted. Christ's presentiment of His death, which He more than once expressed, necessarily included (if He regarded Himself as the Messiah) some presentiment of a Resurrection, though, doubtless, the forms in which this has been reported reflect the knowledge of later facts. Moreover, He was charged at His trial with having once said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days' (Mt. xxvi. 61) —Mk.'s version is perhaps secondary, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands' (xiv. 58). And this (undoubtedly primitive) saying was afterwards interpreted as a prophecy of the Resurrection (Jn. ii. 19-22, 'He spake of the temple of His body. When therefore He

was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said').

Another saying of Jesus, 'Behold, I cast out devils, and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected' (Lk. xiii. 32), seems to take us back to an earlier point of view, from which the 'third day' does not yet mean a particular date, but is only a popular expression for a very short time,[1] and from which it is attached, not to the Resurrection, but to the *death* of Jesus (xiii. 33).

(2) Secondly, even if St. Paul did not know of these sayings of Christ, he must have known 'the common Jewish idea that corruption commenced on the fourth day, that the drop of gall, which had fallen from the sword of the Angel and caused death, was then working its effect, and that, as the face changed, the soul took its final leave from the resting-place of the body.'[2] This idea reappears, with evidential force, in the story of the raising of Lazarus (Jn. xi. 39). It may very well have played a part in the dating of Christ's Resurrection.[3]

(3) The early observance of the first day of the week as 'the Lord's day' (Acts xx. 7; Rev. i. 10) has often been taken as based on the women's story, and therefore as evidence for the Resurrection. But it is quite possible that the Christian Sunday was originally fixed—perhaps before the women's story was generally known—in some other way, *e.g.* by the events of the Day of Pentecost, or by the first appearance of the risen Christ in Galilee, or by the selection of the first available time after the Jewish Sabbath, and that the connection of it with the date of the Resurrection was an afterthought.[4]

(4) Fourthly, there is the women's story of the discovery

[1] Schmiedel in *E.B.* 4067; Holtzmann, *Life of Jesus*, p. 498.
[2] Edersteim, *Life and Times*, ii. 324; cp. the passage from the *Rest of the Words of Baruch*, ix. 7-13, quoted by Schmiedel in *E.B.* 2520.
[3] Cp. Loisy, *E.S.* i. 177, ii. 723.
[4] Cp. Bacon, *The Founding of the Church*, p. 80.

of the empty grave on the morning of the third day after the Crucifixion. It is hardly possible that, if St. Paul had known of this piece of evidence, he would have made no reference to it in the present passage. Nor is it easy to suppose that, having accepted the 'third day' of the authority of the women's story, he yet preferred to express his acceptance of it on the secondary grounds of scripture.[1] If he writes as he does in the present passage, it must surely be because he dates the Resurrection by an inference from the scriptures, and for no other reason. (Even Jn. ii. 22 recurs to the same idea.) To what scriptures, then, does he refer?

At first one turns to Mk. viii. 11-12 with its parallels. According to this passage, Jesus, when asked for a sign, refuses to give one. Mt. xvi. 4 suggests 'the sign of Jonah,' without saying what that means. Mt. xii. 40 explains it as meaning that 'as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' But the secondary nature of this explanation of the sign appears from the next verse, Mt. xii. 41=Lk. xi. 32 (*i.e.* derived from Q), where the comparison is properly based on the preaching of repentance, by Jonah to the Ninevites, by Jesus to the Jews. In other words, the derivation of the 'three days' from the story of Jonah is a comparatively late idea. Of course, St. Paul may have known of it; but it is unlikely. Other passages from scripture have been suggested (*e.g.* Hos. vi. 2; 2 Kings xx. 8; or Lev. xxiii. 11); but they are not supported by early tradition.

There is, however, another passage that may help us. According to Acts ii. 27, 31, xiii. 35, both St. Peter and St. Paul quoted Psalm xvi. 10 ('Thou shalt not leave His soul in hell, neither shalt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption') as a prophecy of Jesus' Resurrection. But if Jesus did not 'see corruption,' He must have been raised, according to the Jewish belief already referred to, *before*

[1] Von Dobschütz, *Ostern und Pfingsten*, p. 15.

the fourth day after death. Hence 'on the third day according to the scriptures' very possibly came to be a common formula, which St. Paul (without necessarily accepting the idea that gave birth to it) included in his statement of the evidence for the Resurrection in the present passage.

(*c*) St. Paul hands on, as he has received it, a traditional list of the appearances after the Resurrection (xv. 5-8). We notice, first, that he uses the same word 'was seen' (ὤφθη) for the appearances to the other apostles and to himself. The word is used almost exclusively in St. Paul's Epistles and in Acts for visions of God or of angels (1 Cor. ix. 1 [referring to the vision at Damascus]; Col. ii. 1 [where a special limitation of the meaning has to be added]; Col. ii. 18 ['sight' contrasted with 'faith']; in Acts it is twelve times used for visions, against two for ordinary sight, and two in derivative senses). In the present passage it takes its sense from what St. Paul says elsewhere about his vision on the Damascus road.[1] According to Acts (ix. 3, xxii. 6, xxvi. 13) he never claimed to have seen Jesus in the kind of way that Stephen did (vii. 56); it was by a voice that he learnt who it was that spoke with him (cp. Acts xviii. 9, xxiii. 11). It was the certainty of direct intercourse with Christ, not the exact manner of it, which mattered to him. This was what he called a 'vision' of Jesus. It was of this that he spoke when he said that 'it was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal His Son in me' (Gal. i. 15-16). Accordingly we cannot safely press the meaning of the word more closely than this in the case of the other 'visions' which St. Paul records.

Now let us examine the list of Appearances—the most important piece of evidence which we possess. First, he says, Christ 'appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once . . .; then He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all . . . He appeared to me also.' This list is

[1] For a more detailed treatment of this, see p. 202.

apparently meant to be chronological.[1] If, further, we are to follow precise grammatical indications, it falls into four groups—(1) Cephas and the Twelve, (2) the five hundred brethren, (3) James and all the Apostles, (4) St. Paul. The natural inference is that the first group contains the appearances before Pentecost, the second that at Pentecost, and the third and fourth those after Pentecost. More in detail—(1) the appearance to Cephas is doubtless the one which was described in the lost ending of Mk., which reappears in Lk. xxiv. 34, and which lies behind the story of the miraculous draught of fish in Lk. v. 1-11; Jn. xxi. 1-14. The appearance to the Twelve (the conventional name for the whole body of apostles; they were, as a matter of fact, eleven at that time) is that described in Mt. xxviii. 16; Lk. xxiv. 36 (transferred to Jerusalem); and Jn. xx. 19, 26 (duplicated). It is significant that these are the only two pre-Pentecostal appearances for which full evidence is forthcoming (*v.* p. 205). (2) It is quite possible that the appearance to 'five hundred brethren at once,' which is so hard to reconcile with the Gospel narratives, is St. Paul's version of the Day of Pentecost. We have already seen how much difficulty there is in the account of this event in Acts (p. 128). It is not unlikely that 'St. Paul may have regarded as a Christophany what Luke preferred to describe as a manifestation of the gift of the Spirit.'[2] (3) The appearance to James is described in the Gospel of the Hebrews (quoted by Jerome, *De Vir. Illus.* iii. 2); that may, however, be no more than an attempt to explain the present reference. But in any case it is likely that some such incident, besides his kinship to Christ, explains the position which James came to hold in the church at Jerusalem some years after the Resurrection.[3] The appearance

[1] It is not a complete list; else why not ὤφθη Στεφάνῳ?

[2] Lake, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 205; cp. *Ethiopian Acts of Peter*, quoted in Budge, *Contending of the Apostles*, p. 476, and von Dobschütz, *Ostern und Pfingsten*, p. 33 f.

[3] Just as, no doubt, the special appearance to St. Peter made him the founder of the Resurrection faith, and secured his primacy among the apostles (Le Roy, *Dogme et Critique*, p. 209).

to ' all the apostles ' (which must mean something more than ' the Twelve '), is possibly to be identified with the incident that underlies Acts iv. 31 (p. 125). An alternative theory is that of von Dobschütz, who thinks that the reference is to a number of separate ' calls ' to missionary work experienced by the apostles.[1]

Whether or not these identifications be accepted, it is worth pointing out that there is no reason to suppose that all the appearances took place between the Resurrection and the Ascension, even if we accept the account of the latter, and of the forty days, which is given in Acts i. The appearance to St. Paul, in any case, came later ; and the coincidence of the chronological and grammatical arrangements of St. Paul's list, so far as we have worked them out, is at least suggestive.

(*d*) The argument of the rest of 1 Cor. xv. is as important for the nature of the Resurrection as the foregoing evidence is for the fact of it. St. Paul is meeting two objections to the preaching of the Resurrection—first, a general disbelief in the possibility of the rising of the dead (vv. 12-34), and secondly, a particular difficulty as to bodily resurrection (vv. 35-58). He answers the first objection by giving the evidence for Christ's Resurrection. He does not say that it was different from what ours will be. Indeed, the possibility of Resurrection in Christ's case depends upon the possibility of Resurrection in general (vs. 13). Unless *we* can rise, Christianity is untrue. The argument is as much from our case to His, as from His to ours.

He answers the second point primarily by the analogy of the seed (vs. 36) ; and here it is natural to suppose that he is still arguing from what he believes about Christ's

[1] *Ostern und Pfingsten*, p. 36. There is the alternative possibility (for it is no more) that the clauses 'to Cephas . . . to the Twelve' and 'to James . . . to all the Apostles' are really parallel, and represent alternative traditions as to the first two appearances. The *Gospel of the Hebrews* puts the appearance to St. James before that to St. Peter. We have seen in other cases how similar claims of priority, between apostles, have affected the Gospel narrative (Völter, *Die Entstehung des Glaubens an die Auferstehung Jesu*, p. 32).

Resurrection. The earthly body—the seed that is sown—must die, in order that it may live again. The process is not conceived, apparently, as one of continuous growth. St. Paul, sharing a misunderstanding of natural history which underlies the whole apocalyptic element in the New Testament, seems to regard the original body of the seed as dying, and the plant as springing up with a new body which is not the same as the old one.[1] 'Thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain . . . but God giveth it a body even as it pleased Him, and to each seed a body of its own' (vv. 37-38). There follows a passage about different kinds of bodies, leading to the conclusion that the celestial life requires a different embodiment from the terrestrial. So the Resurrection life, compared with the old life, is incorruption in place of corruption, glory in place of dishonour, power in place of weakness, a spiritual body in place of a natural body (vv. 42-44).

This passage is to be carefully distinguished from the following verses (vv. 50-54), in which St. Paul is dealing no longer with the dead, but with those who will still be alive at the Coming of Christ. Unless this distinction is observed, the whole argument falls into confusion. For the resurrection will not, according to St. Paul's ideas, come about in the same way for both classes. The dead, whose earthly body has been 'sown,' and has decayed away in the grave, will get in exchange a new body, and be raised incorruptible. It is these dead only who are referred to in the earlier verses (vv. 35-49). Those who are alive at the Coming, on the other hand, having still their earthly bodies, will undergo a process of change: 'this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality' (vs. 53), *i.e.* put it on as a garment *over* the old body, which still survives. When the

[1] Cp. what sounds like a primitive λόγιον in Jn. xii. 24: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone: but if it die, it beareth much fruit.' The analogy recurs in later Jewish thought (*v.* Charles, *Apoc. of Baruch*, l. 4, note).

last trumpet sounds, these two different things will happen : ' the *dead* shall be raised . . . , and *we* [who are still alive] shall be *changed* ' (vs. 52). St. Paul's view of the resurrection of the dead must not be confused with his view of the resurrection of the living. The whole idea of *change* belongs to the latter.[1]

What is the bearing of this on St. Paul's evidence for the Resurrection ? First, the Resurrection body, both in Christ's case and in ours, is spiritual and immaterial. Secondly, in our case (and St. Paul probably means in Christ's case also) the old body is left behind in the grave : the Resurrection body is a new creation. Let us see whether this conclusion is corroborated by other passages.

4. 2 Cor. v. 1 f. The contrast between life and death (iv. 12), and between the inward and the outward man (iv. 16), is carried on into the idea—a natural one for a tentmaker—that the physical body is a ' tabernacle ' which must be ' dissolved ' in order that we may obtain ' a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens ' (v. 1).

St. Paul is here halting between the two alternatives which we have just seen expounded in 1 Cor. xv. At the moment of death, indeed even before death (v. 2), the new body is waiting for us, ready-made in heaven. How pleasant it would be not to die, but to be alive at the Coming, and to put on this heavenly body over the earthly ! It is the necessity of dying which makes us ' groan ' : that is our ' burden ' (v. 4 ; cp. Rom. viii. 23 for what is probably just the same idea). Yet, unless the Parousia comes very soon, St. Paul sees that the survival and change of the old body will be impossible. And so he warns the faithful that they must have courage to face the alternative, which he describes as an absence from the body, which is the condition of presence with the Lord (vv. 6-8 :

[1] This in spite of Lake, *The Resurrection*, p. 22 ; cp. Charles, *Eschatology*, chap. xi., and notes on *Apocalypse of Baruch*, xlix.-li. (the Jewish background of St. Paul's views).

the earthly life is ' to be abroad '—ἐκδημεῖν ; the heavenly life is ' to be at home '—ἐνδημεῖν).

We cannot fully appreciate this passage, because we have lost the idea of the imminence of the Parousia, which conditions it. But the meaning is clear, and it entirely corresponds with that of 1 Cor. xv.

5. Rom. viii. 11, ' He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you.' Here the primary reference is to conversion rather than resurrection. Yet it is worth noticing that ' mortal bodies ' does not mean ' dead bodies,' but ' bodies liable to death.' The raising of Christ from the dead is one thing ; the quickening of the bodies of those who are still alive at the Coming (the ' change ' of 1 Cor. xv.), though compared with it, is another thing. It would not be fair to press the comparison in such a way that the idea of raising dead bodies applied to both sides of it. So far as the passage goes, then, it falls in with our previous conclusions.

The same distinction between those who are alive and those who are dead at the time of the Parousia appears in the *locus classicus* for St. Paul's Eschatology, 1 Thess. iv. 13-18 . . . ' the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds.' The later passages only fill in this outline. Such again, to take the most obvious passage from St. Paul's later epistles, is the doctrine of Phil. iii. 20-21 : ' For our citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory.' The reference is evidently to those who will be alive at the Parousia.

St. Paul's evidence may be summed up thus. The *fact* of the Resurrection he accepts as part of the Christian tradition. The *time* is apparently an inference from Old Testament Scripture. The *proof* he finds in the Appearances, of which his own experience on the Damascus road is

typical. The *manner* is probably that of the resurrection of all dead men. The old earthly body is left in the grave ; the resurrection body is a new spiritual body substituted for it.

We shall do well to allow for the possibility that St. Paul was not always consistent, and did not entirely think out his views on this subject. For instance, if we are right in thinking that he refers to Psalm xvi. 10 for the time of the Resurrection (*v.* above, p. 165), we must consider the possibility of his having shared the belief in the incorruption of Christ's body which that text suggests. The association of the burial with the resurrection (*καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη, καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται*, 1 Cor. xv. 4) might be held to point the same way. But in neither respect is St. Paul giving his personal opinion. He is quoting what is practically a formula ; and this cannot outweigh the deliberately expressed view as to the nature of the Resurrection which we have traced throughout his epistles. Consequently, if any conclusion may be drawn from the above evidence, it is that *he believed in the Resurrection without believing in the Empty Tomb.*

(iii)

The Empty Tomb—St. Mark's Evidence

1. *The Death.*—This is explicitly stated in Mk. xv. 37, and corroborated by the evidence of the centurion in xv. 44-45. The latter passage is peculiar to Mk. It looks as though it rested upon good evidence. St. Matthew and St. Luke may have omitted it as likely to raise doubts about the fact of death, or as speaking disrespectfully of the Lord's body (*πτῶμα*, 'corpse'). Otherwise it may have been added for evidential motives, to exclude the hypothesis that Christ had merely swooned on the Cross : an alternative defence against this idea is provided by Jn. xix. 34—the piercing of the side.

2. *The Burial.*—(1) A person crucified on Friday morning would be expected to outlive the Sabbath. Jesus' death on Friday afternoon was quite unforeseen, and no

preparations had been made for the burial. But there was still time for some disposal to be made of the body before sunset, when the Sabbath would begin—this must be the meaning of the curious and perhaps interpolated phrase of Mk. xv. 42, 'because it was the Preparation.'[1] (2) This office is undertaken by Joseph of Arimathæa (xv. 43). What was his motive? He was, says Mk., a 'councillor of honourable estate'; he may therefore have been acting for the Sanhedrin. But the Sanhedrin would not have met at such short notice, and about so small a matter; and the affair was, in any case, in Pilate's hands. The explanation seems rather to lie in the further description of Joseph as one 'who also himself was looking for the Kingdom of God.' He was probably a sympathiser rather than a disciple of Jesus. His act is described as a 'bold' one: he risked something in doing it. The way in which he disappears in subsequent history bears out the impression of an impulsive act of charity done hurriedly and in secret. (3) Joseph's interview with Pilate is described from the position of one inside the house. He 'came' to the house, and 'went in' to Pilate's presence. His bold bearing is noticed. Pilate 'calls' the centurion, and questions him, before granting the body. Perhaps the centurion himself was one of St. Mark's sources of information, not only for this incident, but also for the scene of the Crucifixion, some features of which are described as though by an eye-witness (although none of the disciples were present), and the effect of which is vividly summed up in xv. 39. (4) Joseph, having obtained the grant of the body, buys a linen cloth (v. 46; a small point, not easily added to Mk., but easily omitted by St. Matthew and St. Luke), takes down the body (nothing is said of his assistants, if any), winds it in the linen cloth, and lays it in a tomb. There is no time to embalm the body; the women, who are watching Joseph's actions (v. 47), see that this has not been done, and therefore come with spices on Sunday morning for this very purpose (xvi. 1). The

[1] Cp. Lake, *The Resurrection*, p. 52.

tomb is one of the rock-chambers with radiating galleries usual in that locality, and known as 'Kokim-graves.'[1] The entrance is probably in the face of a small cliff, and is closed by a large stone rolled against it (vs. 46). There is nothing in this description that is not clear and consistent.

3. *The women's visit to the tomb.*—(1) Very early on Sunday morning—the first available time after the end of the Sabbath on Saturday evening—the women set out for the tomb, bringing spices with which to embalm the body. (Incidentally, this shows that they had no expectation of a Resurrection.) As they go they remember the big stone which they saw Joseph roll against the door of the tomb. (They had forgotten this difficulty; or, the disciples having fled, there was no one to help them: they did not know Joseph, or could not ask him.) As they approach the scene of the burial, they 'look up' (ἀναβλέψασαι)—a point dependent upon the position of the tomb in the face of the cliff, and quite beyond the power of invention—and see that the stone is already rolled back from the entrance. It is implied that the stone was easily recognisable. This, and not merely the difficulty of rolling it away, is referred to in the words 'for it was exceeding great' (xvi. 4). There is no support in this part of the narrative for Lake's suggestion,[2] that the women may have come to the wrong tomb, though, of course, such a mistake may possibly have been made. (2) Seeing no one outside the tomb, the women enter into it, and at once see 'a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe' (vs. 5). A slight doubt about the reading here ('entering,' εἰσελθοῦσαι, ought perhaps to be ἐλθοῦσαι, 'coming up to'; and there is a similar doubt about 'went out,' ἐξελθοῦσαι, in vs. 8), together with the difficulty of supposing a young man seated inside a 'Kokim-grave,' makes it possible that the women never actually entered the grave.[3] But the account as a whole goes against this; in particular, the fact that the entrance to the tomb, and the stone, had

[1] Lake, *op. cit.* p. 170. [2] *Op. cit.* p. 251.
[3] Lake, *op. cit.* p. 62.

been in sight for some time, yet no figure had been seen. Moreover, the impression produced by the 'white robe' would be the greater if the women came suddenly from bright light into a dark chamber, or if a ray of sunlight (vs. 2) shone through the opening behind them.

4. *Who was the young man?*—(1) It is generally assumed that he was a supernatural being. But that is not the only possible view. Let us see whether any other hypothesis will fit the facts. The data seem to be as follows:—The young man is not known to the women, but knows what their business is, and therefore (roughly) who they are. He knows that Jesus has been buried here, and in which tomb. He has some reason for coming early to the tomb, rolling away the stone, and going inside (vv. 4-5; the stone *might*, however, have been rolled away before he arrived). He calls Jesus 'the Nazarene.' He believes, because the grave is empty, that He is risen. He speaks of 'the disciples and Peter,' probably because he knows that St. Peter, alone of the disciples, had followed Jesus after the Betrayal, and is still apart from the others. He refers to Jesus' words, spoken between the Last Supper and the Betrayal, promising to go before the disciples into Galilee; for the words 'as He said unto you' (vs. 7) seem to refer back to the prediction of the journey: the promise that the disciples will *see* Christ in Galilee is supplementary. Finally, he is a young man, dressed in a white robe (*νεανίσκον περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκήν*).

(2) Perhaps we cannot get back to the facts that lie behind the story. But it is worth noticing that there is one person who satisfies these requirements—the young man of Mk. xiv. 51, who is commonly identified with the evangelist St. Mark himself. St. Mark, living in the house of the Last Supper, and seeing Jesus and His disciples during the last week in Jerusalem, might very well know who the women were, and why they had come to the tomb. Very possibly he knew Joseph also, and heard from him or from his assistants of the burial. Knowing the hopes

and fears of the disciples, he might have come at the earliest possible moment to the tomb to see whether anything had happened. Nobody but a native of Jerusalem would so naturally call Jesus 'the Nazarene' (cp. the maid-servant of the high priest, Mk. xiv. 67, and Cleopas and his friend, Lk. xxiv. 19): St. Mark was a native of Jerusalem.[1] The young man has had time to examine the tomb (he has been inside all the time that the entrance has been within sight of the women), and is convinced of the Resurrection: we know St. Mark's tendency to accept miracles. He had been with Jesus at the time of the Betrayal (xiv. 51), and had good means of knowing the subsequent movements of St. Peter and the other disciples. Finally, St. Mark may have been present, *and he alone besides the apostles*, when Jesus spoke the words to which the young man refers (xiv. 28); and he was then described as *νεανίσκος τις περιβεβλημένος σίνδονα*.

(3) Even without accepting this identification, we may reasonably suppose that the women met some young man at the tomb. If, however, we prefer the alternative hypothesis that the young man was an angel, we may lay stress on the point that he is described as 'sitting' in the tomb (cp. p. 174), on the *right* side,[2] not exploring it, and that his dress is a (dazzling) 'white robe.' But it is, of course, just circumstances of this kind that would be most easily modified, when it came to be thought that there had been a vision of an angel. And it is difficult to see why the title 'the Nazarene,' or the reference to words of Jesus which the women had never heard, should have been introduced into an angelic speech.

5. *Where were the apostles?*—(1) The young man's message presupposes, as we have seen, some knowledge of the apostles' movements. They had fled at the time of the Betrayal (xiv. 50). They had not been present

[1] The alternative is to suppose that Mk. here adopts the terminology of Acts (*v.* p. 141).

[2] Cp. xiv. 62; Lk. i. 11.

at the trial, or at the Crucifixion (xv. 39-41). But they had not left Jerusalem. They would probably remain in hiding in the city over the Sabbath, and begin their journey back to Galilee on the Sunday. The women are in a position to take a message to them (xvi. 7). St. Peter, in particular, is not far away. (2) 'He goeth before you into Galilee.' That the original prediction (xiv. 28) is reported in its true context seems to be shown by its unity of metaphor with the preceding saying, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad' (xiv. 27). 'I will go before you' (*προάξω ὑμᾶς*) is exactly what a shepherd would do for his flock (cp. Jn. x. 3-5, 16). It also corresponds to Jesus' common custom of 'going before' the disciples on a journey (*e.g.* Mk. x. 32: 'before' is not temporal). The return to Galilee, then, had been part of Jesus' original plan, and was the natural end of the pilgrimage. The young man's message is, in effect, the suggestion that Jesus has already started, as the empty tomb shows, and that the disciples are to hurry after him. If the message was not delivered (xvi. 8), the return to Galilee may have been delayed. But there can be little doubt that it took place soon afterwards.

6. *The women's behaviour.*—(1) 'They went out (*i.e.* if the ordinary reading be accepted, *from within* the tomb), and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them.' The first sight of the young man had caused 'amazement' (*ἐξεθαμβήθησαν*): his words produce *τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις*. *τρόμος* is a favourite word with St. Paul, who uses it four times (it does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament). *ἔκστασις* is used in Mk. v. 42, of the amazement of the parents and apostles at the raising of Jairus's daughter; but it is primarily a Lucan word, being used twice of astonishment at miracles and three times of a state of 'trance' in Acts: *i.e.* it is not particularly appropriate in the present context, and may be part of that later modification of the passage which we have already recognised as possible. In

any case, the women had no opportunity of examining the tomb, and were not in a condition to take accurate stock of the young man's appearance or message. It would, therefore, be unsafe to build too much upon the exact form of the expression, 'Behold, the place where they laid Him!' as suggesting that the women had mistaken the tomb.[1] On the other hand, it would be equally unsafe to suppose that they satisfied themselves of the emptiness of the tomb. That fact rested on the evidence of the young man. (2) Having fled from the tomb, the women 'said nothing to anyone.' The words are emphatic. There can be no point in them, unless they are meant to explain something. They are there to give the reason why the young man's message was not delivered, and why the women's story did not come out until afterwards. How long afterwards? It is a natural inference from St. Mark's narrative that the women's experience was not made known until the disciples met in Galilee, or (perhaps) until they returned again to Jerusalem with the news of the Resurrection appearances. Perhaps it was not published until much later. At any rate it is quite unnatural to suppose that the women's silence only lasted for a few hours, or even minutes, as is necessary if St. Mark's account is to be harmonised with those of the other Gospels. (3) A reason for silence is given—'for they were afraid' (ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ); and there the Gospel abruptly breaks off. In spite of the partial parallel to this ending in Mk. ix. 6 (ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο), it is generally thought that some object of fear was expressed in the original text—perhaps τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς, 'the chief priests.' This fear would be quite in harmony with St. Mark's representation of the disciples' fear of persecution, and of their flight. At the same time the story of the Passion—the Jerusalem tradition—and with it St. Mark's own evidence, might fitly have ended here. What followed was doubtless a scene in Galilee, with a description (from the Petrine tradition) of

[1] Lake, *op. cit.* p. 252.

the Appearance to St. Peter. The loss of this part of the Gospel may not be purely accidental. It may have been removed in favour of the later tradition, which placed the first appearances at Jerusalem. It is, perhaps, fair to trace in St. Mark's account a certain scorn for the women's silence, and to imagine that one of his objects in writing it was to rehabilitate the story of the empty tomb—as the Jerusalem story, and perhaps even because of his own part in it—as evidence for the Resurrection prior to the Galilean appearances. This Jerusalem point of view probably underlies the later transference of the appearances from the country to the city. It is not impossible that St. Mark shares the same feeling, but expresses it in a different way.[1]

7. *Summary of St. Mark's evidence.*—(1) Apart from the doubt about the identity of the 'young man,' St. Mark's story is simple and intelligible. It seems to be a straightforward account of the facts, so far as they were known in Church circles at Jerusalem. St. Mark's own presence in Jerusalem, and the detailed nature of his account of the Passion, bear out this impression of trustworthiness.

(2) St. Mark gives no account of the actual Resurrection, which is inferred from the facts of the Death and Burial, together with the emptiness of the tomb, on the evidence of the 'young man.'

(3) St. Mark's account breaks off, without describing any Resurrection appearances, but not before it has hinted —partly by its very reaction against this view—that the apostles' story of the Appearances, not the women's story of the empty tomb, was the original and central ground of belief in the Resurrection.

[1] An alternative explanation is that St. Mark wished to lay special stress on the evidential value of the appearances in Galilee; that he therefore introduced a reference to them into the young man's speech (xvi. 7), and put a promise of them into Jesus' mouth (xiv. 28); and that it was for the same reason that he represented the women as keeping silence about an earlier but less important incident. (Völter, *op. cit.* p. 6 f.) There is, perhaps, no sufficient need for this more difficult hypothesis. As to xiv. 28, cp. p. 177.

(iv)

The Empty Tomb—St. Matthew's Evidence

1. *The Burial.*—(1) St. Matthew interprets St. Mark's description of Joseph in two directions. For εὐσχήμων, 'of honourable estate,' he puts πλούσιος, 'rich'; the hint of secret discipleship he replaces by the explicit 'who also himself was Jesus' disciple' (xxvii. 57); and, in accordance with this, Joseph's act is clearly attributed to personal devotion. (2) The circumstances of the visit to Pilate are omitted. So is the buying of the linen cloth. Joseph, as a rich man, would not need to make such purchases; besides, the cloth, like the tomb, is represented as new ('clean') and as his own personal offering—these changes are reverential. There is, perhaps, another motive for this omission. St. Matthew accepts St. Mark's theory that the Friday of the Crucifixion coincided with the Passover. It followed that no work could be done on that day. Joseph could not buy a cloth. Simon of Cyrene could not be 'coming from the country,' if that implied that he had been working there (Mk. xv. 21: cp. Mt. xxvii. 32). St. Peter must be rebuked for wearing arms (Mt. xxvi. 52—Thursday night being the beginning of Friday). (3) St. Matthew accepts St. Mark's account of the nature of the grave: even the size of the stone, which goes out with his omission of Mk. xvi. 4, is inserted into xxvii. 60. He agrees that the women saw the burial, and explains that they did so 'sitting over against the sepulchre' (xxvii. 61). Yet he omits to say that they 'beheld' the tomb (Mk. xv. 47), because he makes that the motive of their visit on Easter morning (xxviii. 1).

There is nothing, so far, to suggest that St. Matthew has any fresh evidence to go upon in his editing of Mk.

2. *The story of the guard.*—At this point (xxvii. 62) St. Matthew introduces the first part of a Jerusalem tradition (the sequel is given in xxviii. 11) which describes

how the chief priests and Pharisees, with Pilate's leave, set a guard at the tomb, and sealed the entrance until the third day, in order to prevent any pretence or rumour of a Resurrection. With regard to this story we have to remark (1) first that it supposes a state of things which, according to St. Mark, did not exist. Jesus was discredited. His disciples had fled. Nobody expected a Resurrection —least of all, his enemies. Nobody was in a position to manufacture one. (2) Secondly, the priests and Pharisees would not do business with Pilate, as the story alleges that they did, on the Sabbath. It may be the consciousness of this that makes St. Matthew use the curious periphrasis, 'the morrow, which is the day after the Preparation' (xxvii. 62). (3) But the most fatal objection to the story arises from its inconsistency with the events at the tomb on Sunday morning: and it is with these that we must next deal. Suffice it to say, in passing, that, if the story of the guard rested on good authority, it would not be (as it is) a detached incident, fitting awkwardly into its context, but would have supplied likely alterations in the surrounding subject-matter—*e.g.* in the story of the burial. The story is, in fact, a later evidential addition, to meet the theory that the disciples stole the body and simulated a resurrection.[1] The *Gospel of the Hebrews* carries the same tendency a little further when it says that a servant of the high priest was also present. (Cp. also *Gospel of Peter* and *Gospel of Nicodemus*.)

3. *The women's visit.*—(1) By introducing the story of the guard, with the sealing of the tomb, St. Matthew has made it impossible for the women to anoint the body, or even to approach close to the tomb. They therefore come simply 'to see the sepulchre' (xxviii. 1, θεωρῆσαι) from a distance. (This motiveless act shows at once the incongruous results of the introduction of the guard story.) (2) Then there is a great earthquake: an angel

[1] vs. 63 refers to Mt. xii. 40, and connects the story with the late editorial interpretation of 'the sign of Jonah the prophet' (cp. p. 165).

descends from heaven, rolls away the stone from the entrance of the tomb, and sits upon it. At the sight the guard of soldiers quake, and become as dead men (xxviii. 2-4).

This story entirely displaces St. Mark's account of the visit to the tomb, and of the discovery of the young man. The presence of a number of soldiers in front of the tomb, even if in a comatose state, is inconsistent with the women's behaviour in Mk. They see nothing and suspect nothing, until they enter the tomb. In Mk., the stone is already visible, and has been rolled away from the entrance, while the women are still some distance off: there is no opportunity either for earthquake or angel. In Mk., it is open to believe that the stone has been removed by the young man, in order that he may enter the tomb, and that the Resurrection has taken place already, *in spite of the closed door.* But in Mt. the stone is removed by the angel; and why? Not that the angel may go in, *but that Jesus may come out.* The whole object of the angel's visit is to defeat the Pharisees' precaution of the sealed stone. In other words, St. Matthew holds a different theory of the nature of the Resurrection from St. Mark's, and a more materialistic one.[1]

In any case, although imagining the Resurrection to have taken place at the rolling away of the stone, in the sight of the women and of the guard, St. Matthew gives no description of it.[2] Indeed, he does not seem to have thought out the position which results from his attempt to combine several irreconcilable narratives—St. Mark's account of the rolling away of the stone and of the women's presence at the tomb, the story of the guard, and the story that an angel defeated the stratagem of the Pharisees.

(3) After this, St. Matthew returns to Mk., and, by his sub-

[1] Loisy, however (*E.S.* ii. 717), denies this contrast (cp. Wellhausen, *Ev. Marc.* p. 136).

[2] It is not until we come to the apocryphal Gospel of Peter that we find any attempt to supply this omission.

stantial acceptance of the original tradition, shows that the story of the angel, like that of the guard, is a detached one, not part of a genuine authority. Certain adaptations, however, are made. The ' young man ' becomes ' the angel ' ; ' fear not ye ' takes the place of ' be not amazed,' since the notice of the women's amazement (Mk. xvi. 5) has gone out ; the primitive title, ' the Nazarene,' is lost ; so is the distinction between St. Peter and the other disciples ; the angel, being outside the tomb, says ' *come*, see the place,' instead of the young man's ' *behold* the place ' ; the women, however, never enter the tomb ; instead of Mk.'s ' went *out*,' St. Matthew says they ' departed ' (ἀπελθοῦσαι, ' went *away* ').[1]

4. *The women's behaviour.*—St. Mark's women ' *fled* ' ; St. Matthew's ' depart quickly.' Instead of ' trembling and astonishment,' they experience ' fear and great joy.' Instead of saying ' not a word to anyone,' they ' run (such is their eagerness) to bring the disciples word.' This is a complete reversal of St. Mark's meaning ; and it is brought about without a sign of genuine detail or new authority.

5. *The second part of the story of the guard* (xxviii. 11-15) adds nothing in point of authority to the first. It is extremely unlikely that Pilate would allow any interference of the Sanhedrin in matters of military discipline (vs. 14) ; or that such a plot would, under the circumstances, be worth making. The fact is that, as vs. 15 suggests, the accusation that the Christians had stolen the body, and simulated a Resurrection, was a product of later controversy, and the story of the guard was designed or revived as a piece of apologetics.[2]

6. *Summary of St. Matthew's evidence.*—Where he is following St. Mark's account, St. Matthew shows no signs of the possession of new evidence. The two new elements

[1] It is, however, possible that in some minor points St. Matthew goes behind Mk. to Mk.'s source, *e.g.* the mention of only two women in xxviii. 1, and the attachment of the words ' Even as He said ' to the prophecy of the Resurrection, not of the Appearances (Völter, *op. cit.* p. 12 f.).

[2] Cp. Justin, *Cont. Trypho.*, 108.

that he introduces—the incident of the guard, and the earthquake and descent of an angel—bring confusion into the narrative, and offer no recommendations as against the earlier evidence of Mk.

(v)

The Empty Tomb—St. Luke's Evidence

1. *The Burial.*—(1) St. Luke keeps St. Mark's description of Joseph as a 'councillor,' and as one 'who was looking for the kingdom of God' (Lk. xxiii. 51-52), but, like St. Matthew, feels the need of explaining his motive more fully, and so adds (by an alternative version of Mk.'s *εὐσχήμων*) that he was 'a good man and a righteous.' Probably the further addition that 'he had not consented to their counsel and deed,' is an editorial note to explain how Joseph, being a member of the Sanhedrin, could yet have acted as he did. It contradicts Mk. xiv. 64, which states that the verdict was unanimous, and there is no reason to suppose that it rests on independent information.

(2) St. Luke agrees with St. Matthew in omitting the details of Joseph's visit to Pilate, the grant of the body, and the buying of the linen cloth.

(3) St. Luke's idea of the tomb is at variance with St. Mark's. Instead of being a chamber quarried out of the rock, it is a monument hewn in stone (*μνήματι λαξευτῷ* : xxiii. 53—neither word alone necessitates this meaning, but the combination of both makes it probable).[1] As a consequence, the closing of the entrance by a stone goes out, though the rolling away of it is mentioned (inconsistently) in xxiv. 2. Further, St. Luke shares St. Matthew's sense of reverence in describing the tomb as one 'where never man had yet lain.'

(4) The women's witness to the burial is emphasised.

[1] This would be a natural alteration for a Gentile, familiar with Greek and Roman tombs, to make.

They not only see *where* the body is laid, but also *how*. The result is that 'they returned, and prepared spices and ointments,' making it quite clear that Joseph had not embalmed the body, and that it was to do this work, and not simply to see the grave (Mt.) that they came on Easter morning. So far, St. Luke follows Mk. pretty closely.

2. *The women's visit.*—(1) Although, like St. Matthew, St. Luke omits the women's conversation on the way to the tomb, yet there is no angelic descent to demand this change. St. Luke seems rather to be summarising St. Mark's narrative, keeping the fact that the stone had been rolled away (xxiv. 2), but leaving the manner of it uncertain.

(2) St. Luke follows Mk. in making the women come up to and enter the tomb (he shows no knowledge of St. Matthew's stories of the guard or of the angel). But he wishes to remove the inference that would be drawn from Mk., that the women did not examine the tomb, and satisfy themselves as to its emptiness. Accordingly he leaves time for the examination of the tomb *before* the appearance of his 'two men,' and says explicitly that 'they found not the body,' and 'were perplexed thereabout.' As a consequence of this the young man's words, 'Behold the place where they laid him,' go out: the women had seen it already.

(3) In St. Mark's account the women, at the moment when they enter the small rock-chamber, see the young man sitting on the right side; only one of them, perhaps, is actually inside: they turn and fly almost at once. St. Luke, with his different idea of the nature and size of the tomb, imagines the sudden appearance of two men 'standing' by the three women, after the latter have been some time in the building. It is not surprising that St. Luke, interpreting the incident as an angelic appearance, has altered St. Mark's 'young man' into 'two men': the same theory of angels appears in Acts i. 10.[1] St. Luke's

[1] Cp. references in Lake, *op. cit.* p. 185. Völter (*op. cit.* p. 17) compares the 'two men' (Moses and Elias) of the Transfiguration story (Lk. ix. 30).

version of the appearance is evidently based on St. Mark's, and has nothing in common with St. Matthew's story.

(4) In the angels' message, 'Ye seek Jesus' (Mk.) becomes 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?'—a literary and, perhaps, a Pauline improvement. The essential Resurrection message, 'He is not here, but is risen,' reappears, as in Mk. and Mt.[1] But the prediction referred to is not, as in Mk., the promise of a return to Galilee (for St. Luke knows nothing of any Galilean appearances), but, as in Mt., a prophecy of the Resurrection. The invitation to view the empty tomb goes out, as we have said, since this has already been more satisfactorily provided for.

3. *The women's behaviour.*—They return from the tomb (strictly speaking, not from *within* it; there is a recurrence to the Marcan story here); and instead of saying 'nothing to anyone,' 'they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest' (vs. 9, repeated in vs. 10). St. Luke, like St. Matthew, reproduces a later point of view, from which the interval between the experience of the women and their telling of it tended to disappear; just as the relative priority of the appearances and the empty tomb as evidence for the Resurrection came to be forgotten.[2]

4. Another account of the women's visit to the tomb is incorporated in the Emmaus story (Lk. xxiv. 22-23)—probably as an editorial repetition of the earlier account. To it is added (xxiv. 24) the statement that 'certain of them that were with us went to the tomb and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not.' This does not correspond with the spurious visit of St. Peter to the tomb (xxiv. 12: *v.* p. 195). It is probably an editorial note necessitated by St. Luke's alteration of the Marcan

[1] But the text is doubtful.

[2] Yet even St. Luke knows that the Resurrection belief arose from the Appearances, not from the women's story; but he has his own explanation of this (xxiv. 11), 'And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk, and they disbelieved them.'

tradition. If the women, instead of keeping silence, immediately told their story to the apostles, who were still in Jerusalem, the latter must have wished to verify the facts. St. Luke makes them do so, and thus provides a new piece of evidence for the empty tomb. The words, 'but Him they saw not,' seem to suggest that the women *had* seen not merely a vision of angels, but Jesus Himself (cp. the Johannine story, p. 198).

5. *Summary of St. Luke's Evidence.*—St. Luke is not misled by such traditions as those of the guard, the earthquake, or the angel rolling away the stone. He follows Mk. for the most part, without having any new evidence. His principal alterations are due to a foreigner's misunderstanding of the tomb, to the hypothesis that St. Mark's 'young man' was two angels, and to the belief that the appearances took place at Jerusalem.

(vi)

The Empty Tomb—St. John's Evidence

1. *The Burial* (Jn. xix. 31-42).—This account falls into two parts, of which the second only corresponds to the Synoptic tradition. It describes Joseph as 'a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.' It knows of his visit to Pilate, and the grant of the body. But from this point serious differences begin to appear. (1) Joseph is helped in his work by Nicodemus. Now Nicodemus in the fourth Gospel is the typical 'secret disciple,' being, perhaps, an imaginary character based on the Joseph of the Synoptic Gospels. And one cannot help thinking that, instead of substituting him in the present passage for Joseph, as he might have done, John may have preferred to keep both names. Nothing is said in Mk. of any disciple besides Joseph being present. The hurry and secrecy of the work make it unlikely. (2) Inconsistently with the circumstances of the case, all impression of hurry is

removed from the burial. Joseph acts *μετὰ ταῦτα*, not immediately after the Death. Nicodemus has had time to provide an enormous quantity of spices. Linen clothes are also ready (though the purchase of them is omitted). The body is elaborately embalmed. The only indications of the original haste are that the tomb is 'nigh at hand,' and that the motive of burial is the 'Jews' Preparation' (vs. 42). (3) Prefixed to this account of the burial is a narrative which is intended to be introductory to it, describing the breaking of the thieves' legs and the piercing of Jesus' side by the soldiers. Yet it includes what is apparently the beginning of an alternative account of a Burial at the hands of the Jews (notice the double mention of the Preparation in vv. 31, 42, and the use of the same word, *ἀρθῶσιν*, *ἄρῃ*, in vv. 31, 38). It may be that St. John is combining two different traditions. (4) St. John uses the Marcan word *μνημεῖον* for the tomb. But it is doubtful whether he shared St. Mark's idea of the place. For instance, he places it in a 'garden' (vs. 41); he describes the stone that closed the entrance not as rolled away (*ἀνακεκύλισται*, Mk. *ἀπεκύλισεν*, Mt. *ἀποκεκυλισμένον*, Lk.), but as taken away (*ἠρμένον*, *i.e.* 'raised') from the entrance [1]; and the place in which the body rests is not a radiating gallery, only one end of which would be seen, but a hollow or shelf, so placed that the linen clothes can be seen without entering the tomb (xx. 5), and that two angels can sit 'one at the head and one at the feet, where the body . . . had lain' (xx. 12).

2. *The women's visit.*—(1) St. John, having followed St. Matthew's interpretation to its logical conclusion, and made Joseph embalm the body, has said nothing about the women watching the burial (this would also follow from his idea that the women were not the only spectators of the Crucifixion). Nevertheless, Mary Magdalene knows which is the tomb (xx. 1), and comes to it. The body

[1] Cp. Lazarus's grave, xi. 38-40, about which similar language is used.

having already been embalmed, there is no motive for Mary's visit: and none is given. Mary is alone; yet in vs. 2 she says 'we.' This is another sign that St. John knew the Synoptic account. So is the reference to '*the* stone' (not hitherto mentioned) in vs. 1.

(2) At this point there is a break in St. John's story. He is trying to combine all the Synoptic accounts. He has before him (1) the Marcan narrative of the women's discovery of the empty grave, and of the vision of angels (Mk., as interpreted in Mt. and Lk.); (2) the Matthaean tradition of an appearance of Jesus Himself to the women; (3) the Lucan story of the disciples' own verification of the women's evidence (Lk. xxiv. 24, perhaps combined with xxiv. 12, St. Peter's visit to the tomb). For evidential reasons St. John prefers to lay stress on the disciples' own discovery of the empty grave. He therefore breaks off the Marcan tradition at xx. 1, bringing Mary (who represents Mk.'s women) within sight of the grave, but not up to it. She merely sees that the stone has been rolled away (cp. Mk. xvi. 4), and at once runs back and reports this fact to St. Peter. Then there follows the account of St. Peter's visit to the tomb (from Lk. xxiv. 12, 24), complicated by a particular idea of the resurrection body, and by the desire to make the beloved disciple the companion of St. Peter, and his superior in power of faith. At vs. 11 the Marcan story is resumed, as though Mary had never left the tomb (the dislocation of the narrative is here very obvious). After weeping for the loss of the body (an inference that belongs really to the disciples' visit to the tomb, but has been transferred to hers), she looks into the tomb, sees two angels, and begins a conversation with them. But there is no angels' message, because at this point St. John works in the other tradition of an appearance of Jesus Himself; and Jesus delivers His own message (xx. 17). It is the Synoptic message of the angels; but it is much changed. The first part of it ('Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father') corrects what

St. John holds to be a wrong view of the resurrection body in Mt. xxviii. 9. The second part replaces the appointment of a meeting in Galilee, which, according to St. John, as well as to St. Luke, never took place, by an announcement of the Ascension.[1] This is yet another form—the third—of the Resurrection message.

Thus St. John's account seems to be an attempt to combine a number of different stories into a single strongly evidential narrative. Two apostles independently verify the emptiness of the tomb, in addition to Mary's (*i.e.* the women's) original discovery. We have the appearance of the young man (under the form of two angels, as in Lk.) to the women (represented by Mary), and also an appearance of Jesus to Mary. Further, the orderly arrangement of the clothes in the tomb not only meets the objection that the tomb might have been robbed, but is also meant as evidence for a special theory of the resurrection body, which has power to come and go without hindrance from material obstacles; *and yet the stone has to be rolled back from the entrance of the grave*—a curious inconsistency, which is due to St. John's use of the Synoptic tradition. We have travelled far from the original Marcan tradition; and in every point the old story is more intelligible than the new.

3. *Summary of St. John's evidence.*—From the presence of many details which 'throw back' to the Synoptic tradition, and from the existence of sufficient motives, chiefly evidential, for such new points as are introduced, we conclude that, so far at any rate as the burial and the women's visit is concerned, St. John had no new evidence to go upon, but was endeavouring to combine and reconcile Synoptic traditions with which we are already familiar.

[1] Cp. Völter, *op. cit.* p. 23.

(vii)

The Empty Tomb—Conclusion

1. A summary of the foregoing evidence brings out beyond dispute the superiority of the Marcan tradition.

(1) Nothing that is said about Joseph of Arimathæa in Mt., Lk., or Jn., is more than an expansion of St. Mark's information. No new light is thrown on his motives. The details of his visit to Pilate are obscured. The statement that Nicodemus helped him is probably not historical.

(2) St. Luke and (probably) St. John introduce ideas of the nature of the tomb which are inconsistent with St. Mark's, and intrinsically less likely. St. Matthew throws the whole situation into confusion by introducing his stories of the guard, and of the descent of an angel from heaven, just as St. John does by saying that Joseph embalmed the body.

(3) Attempts are made to strengthen the evidence for the Empty Tomb by St. Luke, who gives time for the women to examine the tomb before the appearance of the 'two men,' and by St. John, who brings two of the apostles on to the scene for this purpose. But St. Luke's account is only a development of St. Mark's, and St. John's is entirely at variance with it.

(4) Similarly, attempts are made to explain the nature of the Resurrection. In Mt. the miraculous removal of the stone, and in Jn. the disposition of the clothes in the grave, represent opposite developments. But even in Jn. the stone is still removed. All these differences are but variations upon the Marcan theme. Upon that we are driven back, not for the solution of all difficulties, but for the truest statement of the original story.

2. The evidence, then, is sufficiently good for the fact that the women who went to the tomb on Easter morning found a man there who told them that it was empty, and spoke to them of the Resurrection. They said nothing

about this at the time. Probably it was not until the disciples met in Galilee, or came back to Jerusalem with stories of the Appearances—or, perhaps, at a still later date —that the women told their tale. Its main allegation was by that time no longer verifiable. Its uncertainties, *e.g.* as to the identity of the young man, and the nature of his message, were easily solved. The young man became an angel : his message became a prediction of the Appearances, or of the Ascension. Gradually the tendency to centralise Christianity at Jerusalem foreshortened the events of earlier days. The Appearances were transferred to Jerusalem. The return to Galilee was forgotten. Apostles began to play a part in the story of the Empty Tomb. Jesus Himself took the place of the young man, and delivered His own message. The Empty Tomb came to be regarded as primary evidence for the Resurrection.

3. Evidence (however early) which was originally inconclusive, and which has been so overlaid by later developments, cannot carry very much weight. A possible reconstruction of the facts, indeed, throws the ultimate responsibility for the story of the Empty Tomb upon St. Mark himself (p. 175). *But, in any case, the women's story was an appendix to the belief in the Resurrection, not the ground of it. Thus we come back again, at the end of our inquiry, to the position of St. Paul* (p. 172), *and we turn from the Empty Grave to the Appearances of the risen Jesus.*

(viii)

The Appearances—St. Paul's Evidence

We have already discussed St. Paul's list of Appearances (p. 166 f.). We may here summarise our results by saying that his evidence is strongly in favour of two appearances before Pentecost—one to St. Peter, and one to the Apostles.

He says nothing as to the scene of these appearances. His idea as to their nature is to be inferred from his

description of the appearance to himself on the road to Damascus (p. 202).

Let us see whether there is corroborative evidence for these appearances.

(ix)

The Appearances—St. Mark's Evidence

1. It is reasonable to suppose that Mk. did not originally end at xvi. 8, but that it went on to describe an appearance or appearances of the risen Christ. The repeated predictions of the Resurrection which this Gospel incorporates, and the episode of the Empty Tomb, would otherwise be meaningless. It is further evident, from the young man's message (xvi. 7), that the Appearances were described as (at any rate) beginning in Galilee. That St. Luke understands this is clear from his omission of the message, when he transfers the Appearances to Jerusalem. Mt., it is true, retains the message, whilst admitting an appearance at Jerusalem ; but it is an appearance to the women only, not to the apostles. The latter are either on their way to Galilee, or are in hiding. There can be little doubt, then, that the lost ending of Mk. described an appearance or appearances in Galilee.

2. Mk. xvi. 7 promises an appearance to the ' disciples.' This means the eleven apostles, because only they (and perhaps the ' young man ') had been present when the promise referred to was spoken (xiv. 28), and (probably) only they, besides the women, had followed Jesus to Jerusalem. Further, it is not improbable that the form of the words ' tell His disciples and Peter ' (xvi. 7) hints at a separate appearance to St. Peter, though other reasons also exist for this mention of the apostle (p. 175). Thus, so far as we can safely carry our reconstruction of Mk., it is important to find that its evidence corroborates that of St. Paul. There were two early appearances, one to St. Peter, and one to the apostles.

(x)

The Appearances—St. Matthew's Evidence

1. St. Matthew keeps the prediction of an appearance to the apostles in Galilee (xxviii. 7), and gives an account of the incident (xxviii. 16). The scene is 'the mountain where Jesus had appointed them.' If this refers to the original ordination of the apostles (Mk. iii. 13=Mt. x. 1= Lk. vi. 12), one has to remark that St. Matthew in that passage says nothing about the mountain, which he has transferred to v. 1. But, equally, no appointment has been made for the present meeting beyond the vague indication 'into Galilee' (xxviii. 7). It is, however, just possible that Mt. is here following the lost ending of Mk., and takes this detail from it.[1]

2. On the other hand, the first appearance took place, according to Mt., not in Galilee, but at Jerusalem, and was seen, not by St. Peter, but by the women (xxviii. 9). But the fact that in this appearance Jesus takes the place of St. Mark's 'young man,' whom St. Matthew has left out, and that the only message attached to it is a repetition of the angel's message just before (xxviii. 5-7, 10), throws suspicion upon the incident. Indeed, it is fairly evident that the idea of an appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem on Easter Day was of later origin. The same tradition reappears in Jn. xx. 14. It is not very easy to say why St. Matthew, who generally lays such stress on Petrine stories, should have omitted the appearance to St. Peter, if it was present in his copy of Mk. Possibly his preference for the Jerusalem tradition of the descent of the angel, and the appearance to the women, excluded it.

In both these appearances—in that to the women, by

[1] Cp. Lake, *op. cit.* p. 89. Bacon, however, thinks that the Galilean meeting (Mt. xxviii. 16) is a conjectural restoration, not based on any knowledge of the lost ending of Mk. (*Founding of the Church*, p. 34). The omission of any appearance to St. Peter perhaps points the same way.

explicit statement (xxviii. 9), and in that to the apostles, by the absence of such contrary indications as are given by St. Luke and St. John—St. Matthew seems to conceive of the Resurrection body as thoroughly material.

St. Matthew gives no other appearances. So far, then, he corroborates the Pauline-Marcan tradition that there were two only (in these early days), of which one was an appearance to the apostles in Galilee.

(xi)

The Appearances—St. Luke's Evidence

In St. Luke's account all traces of the return to Galilee have been removed: the disciples are (as in Jn.) living together close at hand, and the women at once report to them the vision of angels (xxiv. 9). What account, then, do we find of the Appearances?

1. St. Peter's visit to the tomb (Lk. xxiv. 12; cp. 24), besides being hard to reconcile with the preceding verse, lacks textual authority. It is a 'Western non-interpolation,' coming from the same tradition as Jn. xx. 3,[1] and it should be regarded as spurious.

On the other hand, there is a reference in xxiv. 34 to an appearance to one Simon, which is regarded as a proof of the Resurrection. If this is Simon Peter (Lk. only once speaks of St. Peter under this name, xxii. 31),[2] the reference is probably to the Marcan tradition of a first appearance to St. Peter; and it is thus briefly made because to say more would involve a recognition of the return to Galilee, which St. Luke rejects. There is hardly sufficient authority to read λέγοντες for λέγοντας in v. 34 (so *Codex Bezae*) to identify Simon with the unnamed companion of Cleopas,[3] and to suppose that it is the two disciples who are reporting their own experience.

[1] 'They' in Lk. xxiv. 24 hints that St. Peter was not alone.
[2] There is, besides, one reference to him as 'Symeon' (Acts xv. 14).
[3] Origen, *in Joh.* i. 5. Cp. Lake, *op. cit.* p. 98.

2. The latter incident (xxiv. 13 f.) is peculiar to Lk. It seems to come from an independent tradition, which has been worked over, and fitted into St. Luke's narrative (vv. 33-36). It has several curious features.

On the one hand, the lifelikeness of the story, and the primitive tone of much of the conversation (vv. 19-21, 'Jesus of Nazareth . . . a prophet . . . our rulers . . . he which should have redeemed Israel'), suggests an early Jerusalem source. On the other hand, the reference to the third day in connection with the hope of Resurrection (vs. 21), and the importance attached to Messianic prophecy (vs. 27 f.; cp. vs. 44), are anachronisms. And a special theory of the Resurrection body is assumed, according to which it assimilates food, and yet appears and disappears at will (cp. vv. 36-43. This is different from St. John's view, xx. 19-20, though there is a point of contact in Lk. xxiv. 16; Jn. xx. 14). It may be suggested, too, that the manner of the disciples' recognition of their Master is more or less directly related to later Eucharistic beliefs.[1]

Probably the story is based on a genuine tradition as to an experience of some of the disciples when they returned home from Jerusalem after the Passover. It would then be a Judæan counterpart (for the notice of Emmaus seems to be genuine) to the Galilean appearances. There is probability, too, in the theory [2] that the Emmaus story is St. Luke's way of claiming for the Gentile Christian Church (represented by Cleopas and his companion) a special appearance of Christ as striking as that given to the Jewish Christian Church in the person of St. Peter. Cleopas may even stand for St. Paul, and the passage may be classed with many in Acts which work out a parallelism between the experiences and achievements of the two great apostles (p. 132). But the story bears so many marks of later editing that it is impossible to be sure

[1] Le Roy, *Dogme et Critique*, p. 227.
[2] Völter, *op. cit.* p. 38.

of this, or to attach any great evidential value to the narrative.[1]

3. There follows immediately (Lk. xxiv. 36) an appearance to the eleven apostles 'and them that were with them' (vs. 33), which is doubtless St. Luke's equivalent for Mt.'s Galilean appearance to the apostles (*e.g.* the mention of 'broiled fish' points to the lake-side country as the original scene of the incident). The story is strongly evidential, and the bare fact that 'some doubted' (Mt. xxviii. 17) becomes the main *motif* of the narrative. The natural inference from the power of the body to appear and disappear at will, that it was an apparition, is met, first, by the statement that the disciples were invited to touch and see Jesus' hands and feet, and secondly by the more convincing proof that He ate a piece of fish in their presence. The fact of the Resurrection is regarded, both in the appeal to present experience, and in the use of the Old Testament, as inseparable from a particular theory of the Resurrection body (vv. 37-43). This is probably due to the anti-docetic controversies of a later time, which could hardly have been in the mind of Jesus or of the disciples. The commission to preach may come from Mk. The command to wait for the gift of 'power from on high' looks forward to the description of Pentecost in Acts, and gives one motive for St. Luke's omission of the return to Galilee.

4. This scene leads directly to Jesus' departure from the apostles, which is placed at Bethany, and apparently on the evening of Easter Day. (But it is difficult to reconcile this with xxiv. 29; it was already 'toward evening' at Emmaus, which was at least two hours' journey from Jerusalem.) There is no mention of a physical ascension; that is a later notion (Acts i. 9), inconsistent with St. Luke's

[1] For instance, it is possible that vv. 21b-24 are an editorial insertion into the original story. It is the sufferings of the Messiah, not His resurrection, which are the subject of the disciples' doubt, and of the stranger's exposition of Scripture.

present idea of the Resurrection body (xxiv. 31). Nor is there any hint of the forty days' interval, which first appears in Acts i. 3. It looks as though both St. Luke and St. John thought that the Ascension followed close on the Resurrection[1]; but whereas St. Luke believes that the body is tangible before the Ascension, St. John seems to think that it is not. 'Touch Me not,' says Jesus to Mary Magdalene, 'for I am not yet ascended' (Jn. xx. 17). Conversely, the appearance to St. Thomas, with the invitation to touch Jesus' hands and side, comes *after* the Ascension (Jn. xx. 27). These beliefs would give another reason for the transference of the Appearances to Jerusalem.

Thus, though St. Luke's evidence is confused by the addition of the Emmaus story, and by the suppression of the return to Galilee, he bears witness to an appearance to the apostles, and (possibly) to St. Peter also. This Pauline-Marcan tradition is curiously persistent.

(xii)

The Appearances—St. John's Evidence

1. According to St. John the first appearance was in Jerusalem, in the grave-garden, to Mary Magdalene (xx. 14). This is probably another version of St. Matthew's tradition of the appearance to the women (Mt. xxviii. 9). There is a special theory, as we have seen, which regards the body as being in a state between Resurrection and Ascension, and therefore (apparently) intangible. The angel's prediction of an appearance in Galilee (St. Matthew's version of the young man's message in Mk.), is replaced by Jesus' own prediction of His Ascension. It is probable that St. Matthew and St. John have made independent use of the same tradition of an appearance to the women, adapting it to their own points of view. St. John's version represents a later point of view, and cannot be

[1] St. Paul identifies the two events. Cp. Epistle of Barnabas xv. 8, 9; Gospel of Peter x. 38-42.

accepted without a complete reversal of the Synoptic tradition.

2. There follows, in the evening, an appearance to the apostles (without St. Thomas). It probably comes from the same tradition as Lk. xxiv. 36. Jesus appears miraculously, the doors being shut (Jn. specially notes this fact). He greets the disciples in the same words. He shows them His hands and His side (*feet* in Lk.; but Jn. has introduced the piercing of the side, xix. 34). And yet—this shows how oddly traditions survive their meaning—*the reason for His doing so no longer exists*, for the disciples do not suppose that He is an apparition, and St. Thomas's doubt is not of His materiality, but of His identity. Then, instead of the interpretation of prophecy, and the commission to preach, St. John describes the giving (not merely the promise) of the Holy Spirit, in such a way as to suggest that this scene is his equivalent for Lk.'s Day of Pentecost.

3. To illustrate the greater importance of faith than sight, which is the final lesson of his Gospel, and also to emphasise his theory of the Resurrection body, St. John introduces the incident of St. Thomas. This is a further elaboration of the original tradition, that some of the apostles doubted (Mt. xxviii. 17; already expanded in Lk. xxiv. 37-43), and it involves a quite featureless repetition of the appearance to the apostles eight days later. Both the appearances take place on Sunday. This is another indication of the ecclesiastical and Eucharistic atmosphere in which the Resurrection stories grew up.[1]

4. Since, on his theory, the Ascension has already taken place (between the appearance to Mary and to the apostles), St. John has no description of any final parting, but ends with an editorial paragraph (vv. 30-31). In the Appendix to the Gospel (xxi., an addition probably not due to the writer of the rest), there is a further story of an appearance to seven disciples by the Lake of Galilee, which is probably

[1] Loisy, *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 242.

based on some form of the original tradition of an appearance to St. Peter (p. 110). It is interesting to find this further sign of the persistence of the Galilean tradition, which, in spite of all later tendencies, so constantly reasserts itself.

Thus St. John, too, corroborates the Pauline-Marcan tradition of two appearances, one to St. Peter in Galilee, the other to the apostles. But he has transferred the latter to Jerusalem, and doubled it; and (sharing St. Matthew's misapprehension) he has added an appearance to Mary Magdalene at the tomb.

Supposing, then, that the latter tradition is a development of St. Mark's story of the women's interview with the 'young man' at the tomb, *we get a surprising consensus of evidence throughout the Gospels for the two crucial appearances.*

(xiii)

The Appearances—Evidence of Acts

1. *The Ascension.*—In Acts St. Luke's representation of the Appearances has been altered by his change of mind as to the relation between the Resurrection and the Ascension. In the Gospel the final parting (not described as a physical Ascension) takes place (apparently) on the evening of Easter Day; in Acts it is definitely so described, and separated from the Resurrection by an interval of forty days.[1] The new information which has brought about this change seems to come from a source that lays special stress on Eschatology. The forty days are given up to teaching about the Kingdom of God (Acts i. 3). The conversation at the last meeting turns on the same subject (vs. 6). Jesus is represented as accepting the idea of the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, but as refusing to say when this should happen (vs. 7. This is St. Luke's

[1] But cp. Bacon, *The Founding of the Church*, p. 39.

equivalent to Mk. xiii. 32, which he omits in its proper place in the Gospel).

The Parousia will take place, like the Ascension, in clouds (v. 11. Here is one motive for the materialisation of the Ascension). It is curious how little, according to this source, the situation has been affected by the Resurrection. The old expectation still survives.

The idea of the forty days brings a change in the manner of the Appearances. Instead of being few, and strange, they seem to become frequent and familiar (i. 3-4). At the same time, they are strongly evidential — 'proofs' that Jesus is alive (i. 3). Yet no instances are given of these many incidents, so that we are left without any real content for the forty days, either as regards teaching or appearances, and may reasonably think that they rest upon a misapprehension.

The actual account of the Ascension, with its idea of physical levitation (as against the earlier hypothesis that Jesus appeared or disappeared like an apparition), and its reintroduction of the 'two men' of the Resurrection story (Lk. xxiv. 4; Acts i. 10), is probably one of the latest products of the Jerusalem tradition (p. 118). In any case, it adds nothing to our evidence for the Resurrection.

2. St. Peter's speech at Pentecost (ii. 25) quotes Psalm xvi., to prove that Christ could not be holden of death, in such a way as to assert that the Resurrection took place without any corruption of the body (vv. 27, 31). Is this St. Luke's theory, or St. Peter's? Almost certainly it is not St. Paul's (p. 172). And yet St. Luke puts it into St. Paul's mouth, as he does into St. Peter's, in the speech at Antioch (xiii. 34-37). It is probably St. Luke's own idea, based, not on the Empty Tomb, to which St. Peter's speech makes no reference, but on a Messianic interpretation of Psalm xvi.

3. *Stephen's vision.*—'He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing

on the right hand of God ' (vii. 55-56). A comparison with Lk. xxii. 69 (' Henceforth shall the Son of Man be seated at the right hand of the power of God ') suggests the origin of Stephen's words, unless he is quoting the passage from Daniel (vii. 13), with its use of the title applied by Jesus to Himself, but not employed by others in speaking of Him. The fact that St. Paul (although he was present) makes no mention of this appearance in his list in 1 Cor. xv. casts some doubt on the narrative—suggesting at least that it has been considerably developed. Other signs of this are apparent in the superfluous verses, 59-60.

4. *St. Paul's vision* on the Damascus road has already been referred to (p. 166), as giving the clue to St. Paul's interpretation of all the Resurrection appearances. It therefore becomes important to compare the different accounts which are given of this experience in Acts, and to see what was its essential nature.

Acts ix.	Acts xxii.	Acts xxvi.
1. A 'light out of heaven' shines upon him.	It was a 'great' light, and it was 'about noon' [further emphasising its brightness].	It was 'at midday': 'I saw a light, above the brightness of the sun [making xxii. explicit] shining on me and those who journeyed with me.'
2. He 'fell on the earth': the men 'stood speechless.'	'I fell unto the ground': nothing about the men.	'We were all fallen to the earth' [similar development to that above].
3. He 'heard a voice saying unto him' (ἀκούω with acc.): the men heard the voice (ἀκούω with gen.).[1]	'I... heard a voice saying unto me' (ἀκούω with gen.): the men 'heard not the voice of Him that spake to me' (ἀκούω with acc.).	'I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language' (ἀκούω with acc.): nothing about the men.

[1] The proper construction of ἀκούω is the accusative of the thing heard, and the genitive of the person from whom it is heard; but exceptions are common.

Acts ix.	Acts xxii.	Acts xxvi.
4. He sees no one [implied, not stated]: the men behold no one.	The same: but the men 'beheld the light.'	The same: nothing about the men.
5. Jesus' question, 'Saul, Saul . . .?'	The same.	The same, with the addition, 'It is hard for thee . . .'
6. Saul's question, 'Who art Thou?'	The same.	The same.
7. Jesus' answer, 'I am Jesus.'	The same.	The same.
8. Command to rise, and enter the city, and he will be told what to do.	The same.	The same, conflated with Ananias's message,[1] and the commission to preach to the Gentiles.

The upshot of this comparison [2] is that :—

(1) The main features—the light, the blindness, the conversation—persist throughout.

(2) Subsidiary details, especially as to the experience of Saul's companions, change.

(3) There is a tendency to confuse what was thought at the time with what was thought afterwards (as regards the significance of Jesus' message).

(4) Saul only saw a light, but was sure that it was Jesus who appeared (ὤφθη, 1 Cor. xv.). The message was expressed in his own language, Hebrew (xxvi. 14),[3] but he knew that it was Jesus who spoke. The

[1] The part played by the Jew Ananias is omitted in the speech to the Gentiles.

[2] Holtzmann (*Life of Jesus*, E.T. p. 502) is almost certainly wrong in regarding the account in Acts xxvi. as the most original.

[3] Similarly St. Thomas of Canterbury is reported as speaking in Irish to an Irishman whom he cures (Abbot, *op. cit.* ii. 21). And the Blessed Virgin at Lourdes adopts not only the language, but also the theological ignorance of Bernadette (Zola, *Lourdes*, E.T. p. 47). Hardly any circumstance better illustrates the subjective element in such visions.

whole experience, in fact, was a revelation *in* rather than *to* the apostle (cp. Gal. i. 16). Its storm-centre lay within him, not without.

There was *some* external event; but it was only the occasion of the inner conversion. Even if we knew exactly what it was, *we should hardly be any nearer to explaining what really happened.* The recognition of this truth need not make the incident less real, but only less miraculous.

5. *St. Peter's speech to Cornelius* thus refers to the Resurrection (x. 40). 'Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.' We are to notice here (1) that St. Peter knows nothing about any appearance to himself. It does not follow that there was none, but that St. Luke either did not know the details of it, or omitted them, as belonging to the Galilean tradition. (2) That the only appearance referred to is that described in Lk. xxiv. 36, and that the words 'not to all the people' make it likely that we are right in identifying the appearance to 'five hundred brethren at once' with some later event (p. 167).

6. *St. Paul's speech at Antioch* (1) credits the Jews not only with the Crucifixion, but also with the Burial (xiii. 29). Unless this is merely a looseness of expression, the omission of Joseph is curious, and there may be a reference to the tradition which reappears in Jn. xix. 31 (p. 188). (2) Psalm ii. 7 is quoted (vs. 33), not of the Baptism (as in the Gospels), but of the Resurrection. This is probably a genuine Paulinism. Psalm xvi. is also quoted (vs. 35) in the same sense as by St. Peter above (p. 201); but in this case the exegesis is probably a popular Christian one, perhaps connected with the belief in the Empty Grave.

The evidence of Acts is hardly homogeneous. Many currents of belief meet and mix in this book. But the

point of view which predominates is that of St. Luke's Gospel, with its stress on the Empty Grave, the evidential value of the Appearance to the apostles, and the materiality of the Resurrection body.

(xiv)

The Appearances—Conclusion

1. We are seriously handicapped, in passing from the Empty Tomb to the Appearances, by the loss of the last part of Mk. Nevertheless, it is fairly certain that the substance of what is lost, whether or not it is to be found in Mt. xxviii. 16 and Jn. xxi., was an appearance to St. Peter, and an appearance to the apostles.

2. *The persistence of the evidence for these two appearances throughout our authorities—St. Paul, Mk., Mt., Lk., and Jn.—in spite of the alternatives and counter-theories with which it is overlaid, is very remarkable. Here apparently is the crucial evidence for the Resurrection.*

3. The fact of certain appearances, however, is one thing; the exact nature of them is another. And on this point the evidence is by no means clear. St. Paul apparently regards the Resurrection body as a new creation, and has no need to believe in the Empty Tomb. St. Mark believes that the tomb was empty; but we do not know how he described the risen body. St. Matthew thinks that the rolling away of the stone is necessary for the Resurrection, and describes the Appearances as though they were fully material. St. Luke believes that the body appeared and disappeared miraculously, but takes pains to prove that it was also tangible, and physically complete. St. John's idea is the same; but he is not prepared to carry the idea of materiality, as St. Luke does, to its logical conclusion in the story of the bodily ascension (Acts i. 9).[1]

[1] We have to remember that, to a Jew, the idea of resurrection almost necessarily meant bodily resurrection. There would be a strong tendency to accept or adopt traditions in favour of this view. St. Paul, on the other hand, inclines towards a Greek view.

If the Appearances were the original ground of belief in the Resurrection, and if 1 Cor. xv. is the earliest piece of evidence, we shall be right in interpreting the former by the latter, and in concluding that the Appearances were real, but not material. We may believe in the Resurrection, without accepting the story of the Empty Tomb. If, however, we think that the evidence for the Empty Tomb is sufficiently strong, we shall reinterpret the Appearances, as the disciples came to do, from this point of view. But here we are upon the slippery ground of inference, and cannot tell which of our authorities to follow.

On general as well as on particular grounds of evidence the first of these alternatives is preferable. The truest account of the Appearances will be that which stands nearest to the facts, and furthest from the attempt to theorise about them. So soon as it is believed, whether upon the authority of the women's story, or for any other reason, that the Appearances must have taken this or that form, the original tradition is consciously or unconsciously adapted to that belief. St. Matthew, St. Luke, St. John—all show this tendency. Perhaps even St. Mark would show it, if we possessed his missing chapter. But it is still possible to get through the theories to the facts. And the fact which emerges with increasing clearness is the reality of the Resurrection Appearances, as recorded by the pen of St. Paul, and illuminated by his life.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

(i)

It is time to summarise the results of our inquiry. Putting aside the *a priori* or secondary questions about miracles which are raised by philosophy and theology, we confined ourselves to the historical and critical inquiry, whether there is sufficient evidence that the alleged events ever happened.

Taking what are generally regarded as the New Testament miracles as a whole, we divided them into three classes, Visions, Cures, and Wonders. It was necessary, in order to cover the ground, to discuss each of these classes in some detail. But it soon became apparent that comparatively little attention need be paid to the Visions, or to the Cures, since there is probably nothing in the original form of these events which cannot be explained on the lines of religious psychology and faith-healing.

The only case in which the question of miracles needs serious discussion is that of the alleged Wonders. We know of no natural laws, and we can conceive of no power consistent with such laws, by which men could walk on water, or multiply bread, or restore the dead to life, in the way in which Jesus is stated to have done these things. We have no experience, and we can never hope to have experience, of water suddenly changing into wine, of trees withering away in a moment, or of iron gates swinging open of their own accord. Either these events are miracles, or they never happened. The upshot of our inquiry is that they never happened.

(ii)

First we examined the evidence of Mk., the earliest Gospel. Here we found a fairly large group of such stories. But none of them rested on the evangelist's own experience. Nearly all of them belonged to an early period of Jesus' Galilean ministry, the evidence for which came from the stories of the apostolic circle, as transmitted through the traditions of the Christian community at Jerusalem. The last week of the ministry, which alone was described with considerable detail, and partly, perhaps, from the evangelist's own knowledge, we found to be practically free from such stories.

In Mt. and Lk.—Gospels based upon Mk.—most of these stories reappeared, but in a more miraculous guise. On examination we found that the editors of both these Gospels were in the habit of heightening the miraculous elements in the old tradition, and of omitting or modifying features that clashed with it. This at once weakened their own evidence, and suggested that a similar process had been at work in the case of Mk. In the new miracles that they added, Mt. and Lk. went even further in the same direction.

In the fourth Gospel we traced this tendency to its logical conclusion. St. John, we found, selected a few highly miraculous stories, and put them forward as deliberate proofs of the divinity of Christ, at the same time removing from his Gospel almost all traces of the humanity which is the real ground of the claim of divinity.

Looking at this tendency, to create or to exaggerate miracles, as a whole, and gathering up all our conclusions as to the nature of the Gospel sources, we could not feel any confidence that the stories of Jesus' miracles were more than misunderstandings or misrepresentations of natural events.

(iii)

Similarly, with regard to the miracle-stories of the early Church, we found, upon examining the evidence, that our best witness, St. Paul, did not claim for himself or for his contemporaries any powers beyond those of prophesying, or speaking with tongues, or healing by the appeal to faith.

Moreover, we discovered in Acts the same tendency at work as in the Gospels. The better the evidence, and the nearer we could get to the original facts, the fewer became the stories of miracles. The greater freedom of WS. and D from such narratives, when compared with Mk., is the measure of the greater originality and authenticity of those sources. On the other hand, the more dependent we became upon tradition at second or third hand, especially if the medium were the Jewish-Christian Church, the more stories of miracles appeared.

The same conclusion, accordingly, was suggested here. The miraculous element does not belong to the original events, but to the later interpretation of them. It is not fact, but fiction.

(iv)

More difficult questions were raised by two traditions —those of the Virgin Birth of Christ, and of His bodily Resurrection. But in both cases the same tendency favourable to miracles was found to have been at work: facts were more and more overlaid by theory.

The personality of Jesus was a fact that challenged explanation. Speculation about it began at an early date, and passed through various phases. The Christians whom St. Mark knew best, or for whom he wrote, believed that at His Baptism the man Jesus became possessed by the Spirit of God. A similar point of view is represented in the early chapters of Acts. St. Paul believes fully in the

pre-existence and the divinity of the Christ; but he does not find this view inconsistent with the opinion that Jesus was humanly born, and was not shown to be divine before His Resurrection. The author of the fourth Gospel, though he goes beyond St. Paul in making a historical as well as a mystical identification of Jesus and the Christ, is equally able to believe that the Eternal Word came into the world by human parentage. St. Matthew and St. Luke, in the body of their Gospels, accept St. Mark's view of the human birth and the baptismal Spirit. But St. Luke, in the preface which he prefixes to his Gospel, brings out the supernatural meaning of the birth by surrounding it with wonderful events, and St. Matthew opens with a narrative which explicitly describes the birth itself as miraculous. The latter idea has perhaps been introduced into St. Luke's preface by a later hand.

Once this story of the Virgin Birth became current, its theological significance gave it canonicity and permanence. Doubtless it was originally based upon some tradition. It was not a mere materialisation of theology. But the process of dogmatic development in which it is involved, and the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence on which it rests, make it extremely difficult to accept the alleged miracle.

In the case of the Resurrection the evidence falls into two parts. For the reality of certain appearances of Christ to His disciples, it is very strong. For the emptiness of the tomb on Easter Day—*i.e.* not for the women's story, but for the fact which that is intended to establish—it is insufficient. The evidence is complicated by the old tendency to confuse history with apologetic. The women's experience becomes a vision of angels, and their message a demonstration of the empty tomb. The resurrection being interpreted as physical, the appearances are materialised: Jesus eats with the apostles after He is risen from the dead. The final parting becomes a physical ascension.

The fact that Jesus has been seen and can be experienced

as a living person—though the form of the Appearances must at present remain uncertain—is what Christians mean by the Resurrection. The empty tomb is an appendix, not a corollary, of that belief.

As we may believe with St. Mark that Jesus was born of human parents, and yet call Him divine; so we may believe with St. Paul that His human body remained in the grave, and yet worship Him as risen and alive.

(v)

It is not necessary for one who advances a positive argument to meet all the objections that may be urged against it, or to anticipate all the inferences that may be drawn from it. But it may be worth while to end with two points as to the general bearing of our hypothesis upon Christian theology.

1. In the first place, *to reject miracles is not to reject the supernatural.*—Indeed, this is the only condition upon which science and supernaturalism can survive side by side. The believer in miracles makes the double mistake of looking for God, not in the normal event, but in the abnormal, and not in the agency, but in the act. We can only meet this error by insisting that natural laws are the normal rule of God's working, and natural events (not miracles) the ordinary form of His acts. No disrespect to the supernatural is involved in this change of view. Rather, it makes it possible to retain the essence of the belief in the supernatural in the only form in which educated thought can long retain it—that is, without the old belief in the miraculous. In view of the evidence which we have examined, the belief in miracles (if that word be kept) comes to mean the belief that a supernatural power works in and through natural events. 'A miracle is just an ordinary event in which the pious spirit and heart believe that they recognise, and do in fact recognise, the special act of the universal

Providence.'[1] This recognition has nothing to do with science; and science, unable by its own methods to apprehend the supernatural, can say nothing against it. It is a purely religious matter. Provided only that faith does not dispute the verdict of reason that such and such were the historical facts, it is free to maintain, and can prove itself right in maintaining, that such and such is their religious significance. That is all that ever mattered in the belief in miracles. That remains untouched.

2. In the second place, the rejection of the Gospel miracles has always been implicit in orthodox Christology. *The hypothesis of the non-miraculousness of Christ is an extension of the belief in His humanity.* It suggests that a person miraculously born cannot, without a misuse of terms, be called 'perfect man'; that a body which is not entirely subject to natural law is not a human body; that a mind which does not share natural limitations is not a human mind, and that a personality with the power to work miracles is not a human personality.

The acceptance of this hypothesis only carries a little further a change of thought which is gradually being forced upon us. We have never found much difficulty, perhaps, in picturing the externals of Jesus' life as those of a Jew. But it is only of late years, and after long controversy, that we have begun to accept His intellectual limitations as part of the meaning of the Incarnation. We have still to assimilate the idea of the identity of His moral nature with ours, which somehow underlies the reality of His temptation. *The notion that Jesus worked miracles is (we suggest) quite as inconsistent with the doctrine of the Incarnation as the idea that His body or His mind or His moral nature were not really human.*

(vi)

The fallacy which underlies the popular idea of the Incarnation is the dualistic theory *that the divinity of*

[1] **Saint Yves,** *Le Miracle et la Critique Scientifique*, p. 46.

Christ is to be found elsewhere than in His humanity. Directly it is thought that the divine and human in Christ do not perfectly coalesce, directly an attempt is made to explain the one apart from the other, the door is opened to all kinds of errors. The truth of the Incarnation is not that God and man, two incompatible units, somehow came together ; but that *it was always part of God's nature that He should be made man, and that man was always incomplete until Christ came.* The Incarnation is the inevitable meeting of two natures meant for inter-communion. Without it both must remain comparatively unfruitful and unintelligible. Through it, both achieve their fullest possible existence. It is therefore idle to think that by shutting our eyes to the divine in Christ we shall find the human, or that by looking away from the human in Him we shall see the divine. The divine is not the human, and the human is not the divine ; but the divine can only be understood by looking hard at the human, and the human by looking hard at the divine.

The belief in miracles has hitherto been the chief bar to the thorough acceptance of this position. So long as it was thought that Jesus' divinity, which was generally veiled by His humanity, sometimes broke through in acts that were obviously superhuman, it was inevitable that these acts should be taken to be more divine than the rest of His self-revelation. The unmediated Godhead was preferred to the mediated. It was easier to appreciate : it was a plainer object of hope and fear. Yet the *complete* mediation of God by man is the essence of the Christian Incarnation. And it is only by the rejection of miracles that this doctrine can come to its full rights.

(vii)

The rejection of miracles involves the rejection of a distinctive part of the teaching of the fourth Gospel. Not of the other Gospels. For in them the miracles,

however prominent, are not part of the argument. St. Mark may represent Jesus primarily as a healer and wonder-worker. The miracle-stories may be an essential part of his Gospel. But *the distinctively miraculous element* in these stories, is not essential, and could be removed without destroying the historical or psychological unity of the narrative. In the fourth Gospel, on the other hand, the seven chosen miracles are the texts of the teaching, the turning-points of the ministry, and the culminating proofs of the divinity of Christ. It is not enough, for St. John, that the Word should become flesh. The flesh must be transubstantiated, and assume some of the characteristics of the Word. In its speech and acts it must give direct proof of the indwelling God. The embodiment of this hypothesis in the historical person of Jesus is a *tour de force* of Christian devotion; and it has been nobly expressed by the fourth Gospel. But the spiritual splendour of the result should not blind us to its historical and intellectual inadequacy. Historically, St. John's thesis cannot resist the evidence of the Synoptic Gospels. Intellectually, it stands or falls with the belief in miracles. Whilst, then, the central truth of the fourth Gospel—that 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'—remains untouched, the manner in which St. John conceives of the indwelling may be rejected.

(viii)

St. Paul held as high an idea of the divinity of Christ as St. John did. Yet he had no need of such a Gospel. Brought by the circumstances of his conversion into direct mystical knowledge of Christ, he found himself at one with the old apostles in their witness to and worship of the risen Jesus. He saw that their earlier experience of Jesus after the flesh, although historically and logically the ground of their faith, had been almost forgotten in the wonder of the Risen Life. They seldom spoke or

preached about it. It was not the centre of their experience, but what the Germans call *Vorgeschichte*—the prologue, not the play itself. Only the circumstances of the last week of the ministry were vividly recalled, in the light of the Resurrection that followed. Had St. Paul been pressed to give an account of the earthly life of Jesus, he would certainly have described it, conformably with his view of the birth with which it began, and of the death with which it ended, as human through and through. He could not have attributed to the earthly life the qualities of the celestial. The divinity of Christ was to him a fact in the present, not in the past. It was something to be established, not by historical research, but by practical experience.

(ix)

'No man hath seen God at any time.' 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit.' Do we still try to escape from the plain meaning of these words? Do we still think that the Incarnation must somehow make God visible, tangible, audible? Do we fail to understand that God can never be apprehended except in spirit and in faith? This is the crucial point—a quite elementary fact as to the nature of God. Once that is grasped, a great part of our difficulties vanishes. God is present, we are apt to say, in the lives of good and saintly men. There is nothing specially noteworthy in such lives, as the world judges them; there need be nothing to appeal to the senses, no external signs of the divine indwelling, no miracles. But faith knows that God is there. The spirit in other men understands. There is no limit to the spiritual power that flows from such personalities. So it is with the Incarnation. The divinity of Jesus Christ is entirely spiritual. The life in which it is manifested carries no external signs of the Godhead. Touch and hearing and sight may, indeed, help one to understand

and to appropriate the spiritual power. 'If I touch but His garments, I shall be made whole.' 'He taught them as one having authority.' 'And when the centurion . . . saw that He so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.' But the Godhead itself remains intangible, invisible, inaudible, except to the sense of faith. If God were to reveal Himself with the same fulness a second time, would it be in a life that went as far beyond the scientific achievements of the twentieth century as Jesus' alleged miracles went beyond the powers of His contemporaries, and not rather in a natural life entirely given up, as His was, to the knowledge and love of God?

(x)

It can now be seen how the theory to which we have been led by the criticism of the miraculous element in the Gospels mediates between the Christologies of St. Paul and of St. John. As against the fourth Gospel, we suggest that the divine nature of Christ never expressed itself through other than human thoughts and words and deeds. As against St. Paul's indifference to the earthly life of Jesus, we maintain that the mystical knowledge of the risen Saviour must normally be mediated by the historical knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth. We stand for a truer and fuller idea of the Incarnation than any that goes with a belief in miracles. Jesus Christ, as living in space and time, and as studied by historical science, is at once human and divine. But the divine in Him is entirely mediated by the human. To men who remain men He remains a man. To the historian who is merely a historian He yields no results that cannot be explained by the canons of history. Again, as living out of space and out of time, and as studied by holiness and faith, He is still both human and divine. But now it is the human which is mediated by the divine. The pure in heart see that He is God. To the religious mystic and

to the saint there is nothing in Him which is not spiritual and divine.

We may end by thus formulating the hypothesis to which we have been led:—*Though no miracles accompanied His entry into, or presence in, or departure from the world; though He did not think or speak or act otherwise than as a man; though He yields nothing to historical analysis but human elements; yet in Jesus Christ God is Incarnate—discovered and worshipped, as God alone can be, by the insight of faith.*

(xi)

This is not the place to discuss still wider issues. But this much may be suggested in conclusion. The notion that the evidence of God's presence, and the pattern of His power, are to be found, not in laws of nature, but in exceptions to them, not in development, but in catastrophe, does more than damage the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation: sooner or later it perverts all true religion. For the spirit which isolates the divinity of Christ from His humanity is the spirit which separates morality from religion; and the temper which finds God in miracles is the same as that which finds salvation in 'outward and visible signs.'

We can see how Christianity has suffered from the popular belief in miracles; how this idea has encouraged Deistic views of the God whom Jesus called 'Father'; how it has obscured the humanity through which God the Son becomes our Saviour; how it has degraded the belief in the indwelling Spirit; how it has encouraged the magical use of sacraments, and the superstitious cult of holy persons and holy things.

Christianity suffers still. For not only do these wrong ideas and practices continue, but also many of those who despise such things, and worship a non-miraculous God, remain outside the Christian Church. The number of

these increases, and will increase, as knowledge grows, and religion becomes more intelligent. It is not specialised science which is working the change, but general education. It is not materialism which rejects miracles, but common sense.

There was a time when the belief in miracles played an important and honourable part in religious experience and Christian faith. That time is now passing, and will not return. A stage has been reached in the development of natural and historical science from which the popular position ought to be challenged—not only for the sake of clearer thought and higher worship within the Church, but also for the sake of those outside who are looking for God in Christ, but who cannot recognise Him from the description which is given of Him by His friends.

APPENDIX

SOME MEDIÆVAL ANALOGIES

THE general conclusions reached in the foregoing chapters as to the miracle-stories in the New Testament are immensely strengthened by the study of analogous cases. Materials for such a study can be found on almost every page of history. It will, perhaps, suffice to take three instances, which have recently been made the subject of detailed investigation.

(i)

The Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi[1]

St. Francis died on Saturday, October 3, 1226. On the following day Brother Elias, in his capacity as Vicar of the Order, wrote a letter in which, after reporting the saint's death, he described the stigmata as follows:— 'And now I tell you a great joy and an unprecedented miracle (miraculi novitatem). Since the world began no such sign has been heard of, except in the case of the Son of God who is Christ (our) God. Not long before his death, our Brother and Father appeared as one crucified, "bearing in his body" five wounds (plagas), which are in truth the "marks" of Christ. For his hands and feet looked

[1] The evidence is presented in the *Acta Sanctorum* (4th October, vol. ii. p. 648 f.) and is examined by Sabatier in his *Vie de St. François d'Assise* (the references are to the 32nd edition, Paris, 1905). Later critics (*e.g.* Jörgensen in Denmark, and Tamassia in Italy) differ from Sabatier in depreciating the *Speculum*. Tamassia's learned book (*St. Francis of Assisi*, E.T. by L. Ragg) throws many side-lights on the origin and growth of Franciscan miracle-stories.

as though they had been pierced through on both sides with holes made by nails (quasi puncturas clavorum habuerunt ex utraque parte confixas), still showing the scars, and the black mark of the nails (reservantes cicatrices et clavorum nigredinem); whilst his side looked as though it had been pierced, and frequently emitted blood (latus vero eius lanceatum apparuit, et saepe sanguinem evaporavit).'

As to the main fact here alleged—the appearance of the stigmata—no reasonable doubt can be raised. The evidence of Brother Elias is corroborated by that of his opponent, Brother Leo. Visitors to Assisi will remember the small scrap of parchment, bearing the 'Benedictio' and 'Laudes' of St. Francis, which he gave to his friend Leo, and which is the most precious treasure in the great church of San Francesco. Above the large black letters of the autograph, Brother Leo has added in small red letters, in his neat hand—Beatus Franciscus duobus annis ante mortem suam fecit quadragesimam in loco Alvernae ad honorem Beatae Virginis Mariae Matris Dei et Beati Michael archangeli a festo Assumptionis Sanctae Mariae Virginis usque ad festum Sancti Michael septembris et facta est super eum manus Domini per visionem et allocutionem seraphym et impressionem stigmatum in corpore suo. ('The blessed Francis, two years before his death, kept Lent, at the place called Alverna, in honour of the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God, and of Blessed Michael the Archangel, from the feast of the Assumption of Saint Mary the Virgin to the feast of Saint Michael in September. The hand of God was laid upon him through a vision, and a discourse of Seraphim, and the impression of the stigmata upon his body.')

So much for the fact, which neither M. Sabatier nor the Bollandist editor of the *Acta* disputes.[1] But it could be

[1] Nevertheless, Tamassia (*op. cit.* p. 110) thinks that 'the *literary* genesis of the miracle is likely to bring us closer to the truth than the pathological.'

wished that Brother Elias's evidence were a little clearer. He has so sacrificed accuracy to style, as to leave us uncertain whether the phrases 'puncturas clavorum' and 'clavorum nigredinem' are to be taken as equivalent to 'pungentes clavos' and 'clavos nigros' (cp. 'miraculi novitatem' above), or whether they should be translated as we have translated them.

The latter view is preferable. It is almost certain, from medical evidence, that the stigmata—both 'scars' and 'nails'—were *marks*, not *growths*.[1] Besides, it is evident that they could be fairly easily concealed, and that they did not become generally known, even to St. Francis's companions, until his death.

It is not surprising, however, that Brother Elias's rather meagre account should have been thought insufficient. The account given by Thomas of Celano, a year or two later, quite definitely turns the marks into growths. 'There began,' he says, 'to appear in his hands and feet the marks of nails (signa clavorum—here he still follows the original tradition). . . . His hands and feet appeared to have been pierced through in the midst with nails (in medio clavis confixi). The heads of the nails could be seen on the palms of the hands and the upper sides of the feet (clavorum capitibus interiori parte manuum et superiori pedum apparentibus). Their points projected behind (eorum acuminibus existentibus ex adverso). For the marks on the inner side of the hands were round, but on the outer side long (erant enim signa illa rotunda interius in manibus, exterius autem oblonga), and a small piece of flesh appeared, as though the heads of the nails had been bent back and hammered down, standing out beyond the rest of the flesh (et caruncula quaedam apparebat, quasi summitas clavorum retorta et repercussa, quae carnem reliquam excedebat). The marks of the nails were similarly impressed on the feet, standing out from the rest of the flesh (a carne reliqua relevata). And his right side, as

[1] Cp. note on p. 225.

though it had been pierced through with a spear, had a scar across it, which often emitted blood (cicatrice obducta erat, quod saepe sanguinem emittebat).

There is here a distinct tendency to 'improve' Brother Elias's account—and that, so far as one can see, without any new evidence; for the body was buried on the morning after death, and Elias's letter is the only written description by an eye-witness. Thus the description of the marks of the nails as being round on one side and long on the other seems to be no more than an expansion of the original statement that there were marks on both sides. And this, again, has led to the further and less probable statement that the nail-marks stood out from the rest of the flesh. When Thomas goes on to narrate the discovery of the stigmata by the two brothers, Elias and Ruffinus, he makes it difficult for us to believe that marks such as he describes could have remained hidden so long.

The author of the Appendix to the *Vita Prima* goes further. After saying that St. Francis concealed the stigmata as well as he could during his life, he alleges a general knowledge of them after his death. 'After his most happy death, all the brothers who were present, and a great number of common folk, saw as plainly as possible his body adorned with the marks of Christ. For they perceived in his hands and feet not the appearance of the holes made by the nails, but the nails themselves, made of the saint's own flesh, a constituent part of his body (non quasi clavorum puncturas, sed ipsos clavos, ex eius carne compositos, et eidem carni innatos—the translation is loose, but gives the essential meaning). Moreover, they saw the black mark of the iron (ferri nigredinem). And his right side, as though it had been pierced with a spear, was printed with the red scar of a perfectly genuine and obvious wound (verissimi ac manifestissimi vulneris rubea cicatrice erat obtractum) which often emitted, during his lifetime, his sacred blood.'

The literary dependence of this passage on Brother

Elias's letter is obvious enough. So is the writer's tendency to materialise the marks of the nails. The description he rejects—clavorum puncturas—is the very phrase of Elias that we found obscure. Thomas's theory that the marks stood up above the flesh is further elaborated; and the wound in the side becomes, for the first time, 'red.' In these changes the author is simply editing his authorities. There is no sign of new evidence.

Bonaventura's 'official' life of the saint (1260), although composed (says the editor of the *Acta Sanctorum*) after diligent consultation with such of St. Francis's companions as were still alive, carries the process of 'improvement' still further. His account is based mainly on that of Thomas, the alterations or omissions being designed to make the story more clear. But he has also consulted the author of the Appendix, for the wound in the side is described as 'rubra cicatrice.' He corroborates the idea that none of the brothers except Elias and Ruffinus knew of the stigmata during the saint's life. But he compensates for this by the extravagant manner in which the marks are described after St. Francis's death. For, after taking over from the Appendix the statement that the nails were of a black colour, like iron, and that they were a constituent part of the flesh, he goes on to say that 'if they were pressed from any one side, at once they pushed out against [or on] the further side, as though they were solid right through (dum a parte qualibet premerentur, protinus quasi continui et duri ad partem oppositam resultabant). This must surely be a pure exaggeration, born of the tendency to materialise the stigmata; though it may very well have been one of the brothers, and not Bonaventura himself, who started the notion.[1]

[1] The popular legends of the early part of the fourteenth century added the further detail that the points of the nails 'were bent back and riveted in such fashion that under the bend and riveting, which all stood out above the flesh, might easily be put a finger of the hand, as in a ring' (*Fioretti*, E.T. in *Temple Classics*, p. 194).

As for the wound in the side, Bonaventura becomes frankly fanciful. 'It was red,' he says, 'and assumed a rounded shape, owing to the shrinking of the flesh, so that it resembled a most beautiful rose' (rubeum, et ad orbicularitatem quandam carnis contractione reductum, rosa quaedam pulcherrima videbatur).

But the logical conclusion of the process of 'improvement' is reached by an Englishman, Roger of Wendover, whose history of the matter was transcribed and edited by Matthew Paris [1] in 1259.

According to this account the stigmata appeared only fifteen days before the saint's death. 'Wounds appeared in his hands and feet, continually emitting blood' (sanguinem jugiter emittentia: the bleeding is here transferred from the wound in the side, and exaggerated). Moreover 'his right side was so open, and so sprinkled with gore, that even the hidden and inward parts of the heart could be quite clearly seen' (adeo apertum et cruore respersum apparuit, ut etiam secreta cordis intima perspicua viderentur). To such lengths has the story gone!

Further, a new miracle is announced. A great crowd having gathered (this is contrary to all the early evidence), and several cardinals being present, the dying saint declares that, in order to confirm the faithful, and to corroborate the miracle, the wounds which they now see in his body all open and stained with blood (aperta et sanguine cruentata) shall, at the moment of his death, become so healed and closed up as to seem just like the rest of his body. Accordingly, says the historian, 'when he was dead, there remained not a single mark either in side, or feet, or hands, of the wounds fore-described.'

This was, perhaps, a pilgrim's tale.[2] Under different circumstances one might have supposed that it repre-

[1] *Chronica Maiora*, vol. iii. p. 134, ed. of 1876, in *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*.

[2] Sabatier, *op. cit.* p. 408.

sented an attempt to explain—in answer to unbelievers—why no marks were found on the body after death; and one might compare the fact that the body was buried with unnatural speed. But no such deception seems to have been practised. There really were marks on the body—the product of the saint's intense sympathy or imagination.[1] Originally they were not more than marks. It was the piety of St. Francis' companions, and the love of miracles that seems to be inseparable from uneducated religion, which led to the gradual elaboration and materialisation of the stigmata.

Our evidence in this case has been taken from eye-witnesses, and contemporary, or almost contemporary, writers. 'If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?'

(ii)

St. Catherine of Genoa

In an elaborate Appendix to Part II. of his great book, *The Mystical Element in Religion*, Baron von Hügel has given a 'chronological account and critical analysis of the materials' for the Life and Legend of St. Catherine. Although it only incidentally deals with the question of miracles, this inquiry throws so much light on our problem that some account must be given of it.

Von Hügel begins by laying down three 'laws, which regulate the growth of all religious devotional biography.'

[1] This is the first recorded instance of stigmatisation. But in later times the phenomenon has been fairly common. The Capuchin nun, Veronici Giuliani (1727), was canonised on this account in 1831. Maria of Mörl (1833) became the centre of many pilgrimages. Other cases, genuine or doubtful, occurred in 1820 and 1873. Medical science now recognises stigmatisation as 'a form of vesication' (Myers, *Human Personality*, i. 188). The case of Louise Lateau (*ibid.* i. 492) proves conclusively enough the nature of the phenomenon (cp. *ibid.* ii. 513, 527).

The first is that contemporary witnesses differ in their accounts of the same facts. The second is that traditions are further varied and elaborated by later redactors. The third is that at a still later stage attempts are made to harmonise or soften these variations.

These three stages may be traced not only in the mediæval lives of saints, but also in the books of the Old and New Testaments. With respect to Moses and the Mosaic Code, the first law is illustrated by the contrast between the Jahvist and Elohist narratives, the second by the various developments of Deuteronomy and the Priestly Code, and the third by the redaction which left the books in their present form. Again, the representation of David passes through the first stage in some of the Psalms and the books of Samuel, through the second in the bulk of the Psalter, and through the third in the Chronicles. In the New Testament the same laws apply most notably to the witness of the Church to Christ. First Mk. and Q give two largely original but different portraits; secondly, St. Paul and Jn. carry on the variations into a secondary reflective stage; and lastly, the third stage is reached in the gradual fixing of the canon of the New Testament.

Von Hügel proceeds to trace the same tendencies in the successive layers of tradition as to the life and teaching of St. Catherine—the contemporary documents, the earliest life, the first MSS. of the *Vita et Dottrina*, the first part of the *Dialogo*, the second part of it (printed), the *Dicchiarizione*, and the *Vita* proper. Only one or two points need be noticed here.

1. The *Dialogo* of 1550 (?) reacts upon the *Vita* of 1547-48. All the materials of the earlier work ' have been re-thought, re-pictured, re-arranged throughout, by a new, powerful, and experienced mind, a mind dominated by certain very definite schematic conceptions as to the constitution of the human personality, the nature of holiness, and the laws of its growth,' and one ' which is determined to find or form concrete examples of these concep-

tions in and from the life of Catherine.'[1] 'Nevertheless, in each of these cases, the *Dialogo* exaggeration is suggested by some phrase or word in the *Vita* which has been taken up into the new context and medium of this other mind, and has come to mean something curiously (though often in form but slightly) different from that older account.'[2]

Side by side with exaggeration are other cases in which bold doctrinal sayings have been softened down. Thus:—

Vita.	*Dialogo.*
'If any creature could be found which did not participate in the divine goodness, that creature would be as malignant as God is good.'	'The soul bereft of the Divine love becomes *well-nigh* as malignant as the Divine love is good and delightful. *I say "well-nigh," for God shows it a little mercy.*'

2. The *Dialogo*-writer of 1551 'combines the most detailed dependence on the materials of the *Vita*-proper with the most sovereign independence concerning the chronology, context, and drift of those same materials.'[3]

This is illustrated by the 'Garzonzello' episode,[4] in which the *Dialogo*-writer, 'having combined, for the purpose of describing Catherine's latter-day habits, the *Vita's* account of her unusually peaceful dispositions of soul, obtaining in 1499, with the *Vita's* account of her penance and confessions in 1473, now utilises here Marabotto's account of her confessions to him from 1499 onwards . . . for an entirely different purpose and context than those developed by the Confessor himself.'

3. The *Dicchiarizione* introduces a number of theological 'corrections' into Catherine's teaching, principally on the subject of Purgatory, about which papal declarations unfavourable to Catherine's teaching had lately been made. 'The "corrections" insist upon three doctrines, in each case in demonstrable contradiction with Catherine's authentic teaching.'[5]

[1] Vol. i. p. 399. [2] *Ibid.* p. 400. [3] *Ibid.* p. 424.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 425. [5] *Ibid.* p. 448.

In addition to these instances, which illustrate fairly enough the way in which the variations and exaggerations of tradition come about, we may take two cases of materialisation.

(1) The first, in which the story of St. Catherine approaches that of St. Francis, is the legend of the Spiritual Stigmata, inserted into the *Vita* on the authority of Catherine's maidservant, 'the credulous and long-lived Argentina.'[1] It is admitted that the stigmata were not visible externally; but 'In proof that this holy woman bore the stigmata interiorly, a large silver cup was ordered to be brought in, which had a very high-standing saucer. The cup was full of cold water, for refreshing her hands, in the palms of which, because of the great fire that burned within her, she felt intolerable pain. And on putting her hands into it, the water became so boiling that the cup and the very saucer were greatly heated.' Indeed, Argentina even alleges that 'one of Catherine's arms lengthened itself out by more than half a palm beyond its usual length' in the stress of her pain. Such is the evidence of a credulous eye-witness.

(2) The last instance is the materialisation of a religious experience. St. Catherine had often spoken of the intensity of the 'spiritual joys and sufferings that she felt within her heart.' Hence the *Vita*: 'This holy soul, several months before her death, left an order that, after her death, her body should be opened and her heart examined, because they would find it all consumed (burnt up) by love. Nevertheless, her friends did not dare to do so.'[2] 'It is sad to note,' adds the biographer, 'how rapidly and easily, all but inevitably, the vivid, spiritual ideas and experiences of Catherine were thus materialised and spoilt.'

[1] Vol. i. p. 210. [2] *Ibid.* p. 219.

(iii)

St. Thomas of Canterbury

The last case that we shall take is the most remarkable of all, both for its own sake, and for the light which it throws upon the miracle-stories of the Gospels. The great body of material relating to the death and miracles of Archbishop Becket [1] has been critically edited by Dr. Edwin Abbott, himself a distinguished Biblical scholar, in his *St. Thomas of Canterbury*.[2]

The book falls into two parts. The first is a study of the various accounts of the murder of the Archbishop. The second is an investigation into the evidence for the miracles that took place after his death.

As regards the first part, it will be enough to summarise the results. Although the murder was described within a few years by no less than five eye-witnesses, by an intimate friend who was not present, and by a great number of anonymous historians, yet it is extremely difficult to arrive at an accurate notion of the event. 'From a comparison of the narratives,' says Dr. Abbott, 'the first and most general conclusion is one that must be most unsatisfactory to all those who desire short cuts to truth. For it is this, that no general rule can be laid down as to the value of an early account as compared with a late one. An early account sometimes teems with falsehoods. A late account sometimes corrects falsehoods; sometimes makes them falser, and adds to their number.' [3] Certain rules may be laid down in the consideration of evidence. (1) An early narrative, if not from an eye-witness, mostly contains 'lies'—referring to the candid admission of Garnier, the author of a French poem about St. Thomas, that in the early days of composition he 'often lied' (suvent i menti).[4] (2) The evidence of one eye-witness

[1] Published in the Rolls series.
[2] 2 vols., London, 1898.
[3] Vol. i. p. 192.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 25.

is of more value than the concurrent testimony of many non-eye-witnesses. (3) The evidence of non-eye-witnesses is only so far valuable as it preserves the evidence of eye-witnesses, distinct from inferences and corrections made by the former. (4) The evidence of a late non-eye-witness is particularly liable to the inferential taint. He may misinterpret the words, and misarrange, misapply, or misjudge the statements of his authorities, besides omitting or altering incidents from the Fallacy of the Fitness of Things, or from motives of edification. 'The man who is to be distrusted is the man whom one must always suspect of wanting to infer, and to rearrange in chronological order where there are no data for so doing, and to insert what is edifying, and to omit or modify what is non-edifying, and to clear up what is obscure by slightly altering the words; and, worst of all, to do all this in such a way as not to allow us to distinguish what belongs to him from what belongs to his originals.' [1] On the other hand, 'It is the plain prose writer who is to be trusted, when he writes about what he has seen and heard—the man who is not a classical student, not given to allusions, not a fastidious composer, softening facts for style's sake; not a historical student, given to the finding of analogies, or correspondences between cause and effect; not a theologian, bound to find sermons in facts and good everywhere. The simple, matter-of-fact reporter, losing himself in his subject, will often insert what is characteristic of his hero, even though it may be non-edifying or even a little scandalous.' [2]

It is hardly necessary to point out the important bearing of these conclusions upon the problem of evidence which we have been discussing. Mk. and Q, the Synoptists and the fourth Gospel, all have their analogies in the chroniclers of the death of Becket. Everywhere similar tendencies are at work. Everywhere the problem of evidence is much the same.[3]

But it is with respect to its miracle-stories that the

[1] Vol. i. p. 210. [2] *Ibid.* p. 211. [3] Cp. vol. ii. p. 308.

tradition of St. Thomas becomes of supreme interest. Some men work 'miracles' during their life, others after their death. The very qualities that prevented Thomas from being regarded as a saint during his life account for the cultus and miracles that followed hard on his death. He was a champion of the Church and of the people against the feudal powers; he was a true martyr of the Church militant here on earth.[1] Consequently, in spite of the opposition and discouragement against which the earlier miracle-stories had to make their way —and partly, no doubt, just because of them—the martyr's blood and the martyr's tomb made so deep an impression upon the imagination and affection of the faithful, that from the third and fifth days after the murder (when the first and second miracles recorded by Benedict took place), cures of all descriptions began to occur. Among the first thirty patients described by Benedict[2] are five cases of blindness, one of dumbness, three of lameness, two of fever, and one of paralysis. Nine are men, ten women, and seven children.

Of these early 'miracles' Dr. Abbott writes: 'I should be disposed to think that almost all the early miracles were facts, corresponding largely to the descriptions of them—those, I mean, narrated in Benedict's treatise as occurring in the days when the Martyr's fame was not yet strong enough to suppress his enemies in the flesh, when it was dangerous to be cured at his tomb, and dangerous even to talk of being thus cured. But if these early miraculous narratives were generally authentic or historical, the "emotional shock" must have been strong indeed. No other saint canonised in the Christian Church —so say St. Thomas's biographers, and probably with correctness—could boast of so many acts of healing. Moreover, in the Lives of the Saints, the miracles related are often very vaguely described and poorly attested: but in the books of St. Thomas's miracles several are so circumstantially detailed by chroniclers near the

[1] Cp. vol. ii. p. 302 f. [2] Vol. i. p. 250.

time, and so well certified, that a scientific man, while denying their supernatural character, is forced to admit their extraordinary nature, and to regard them as cures wrought through the imagination, far exceeding in rapidity (and sometimes even in completeness and permanence) anything that could be effected by recognised medical means.' [1]

It was not long, however, before the fame of the saint, and the superstition of the people, began to produce a more extravagant type of 'miracle'—a change of temper that corresponds to the supersession of the simpler chronicle of Benedict by the more elaborate and artificial narratives of his rival William.[2]

From this period come the stories of patients who are rewarded if they make their pilgrimage to Canterbury, and punished if they do not—the saint being no less exacting in death than he had been in life.[3] Other stories anticipate the Christian Scientist's distrust of doctors.[4] Here, too, are degenerate miracles. A prisoner's chains are miraculously loosed by a draught of Canterbury water.[5] Dead animals are restored to life.[6] Canterbury water is changed into milk.[7] A baby, eight months old, sings the *Kyrie Eleison*.[8] A starling, when seized by a kite, invokes St. Thomas; the kite releases its prey, and drops down dead.[9] There is no longer any attempt to criticise the stories that people tell. 'When pilgrims ascribe a thing to a miracle,' says William, 'and become pilgrims on account of it, I do not like to reckon it non-miraculous, or to contradict them concerning those whom they have actually seen die [he is speaking of a case of revivification]. For, if one is satisfied about the good fame and life of the narrators, one ought also to be satisfied about their veracity.' [10] The motive of gain, too, was a pressing one. 'For,' he admits, 'although faith is rare, because many people speak many lies, yet, just as it is

[1] Vol. ii. p. 299. [2] Vol. i. pp. 229, 302. [3] Vol. ii. p. 11.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 12. [5] *Ibid.* p. 25. [6] *Ibid.* pp. 32, 34, 71.
[7] *Ibid.* p. 33. [8] *Ibid.* p. 35. [9] *Ibid.* p. 67. [10] *Ibid.* p. 62.

natural to conjecture a beggar to be a liar, so it is by no means natural to make such a conjecture about the nobility, who propitiate and conciliate heaven by pilgrimages.' [1]

William's exaggerations were at least based on facts. But there is sufficient evidence that within two or three years of the martyr's death stories of a purely legendary character—as that St. Thomas's footprints were miraculously impressed on the stone floor of the cathedral, or that, when dining with the Pope, he changed water into wine—were in circulation, and tended to prevail over the more sober narratives.[2]

The most interesting cases of all, from an evidential point of view, are those which are described both by Benedict and by William. They include the remarkable case of Eilward of Westoning, who, after being castrated, and having his eyes put out, as a punishment for theft, recovers his sight. The evidence here is good; but it is clear that the punishment, brutal as it was, did not always cause complete loss of sight, that the man only recovered the use of one eye, and that there was no restoration of the other mutilated parts (for this is only alleged by an afterthought of the inferior authority).[3]

Another story describes the revivification of a boy, dead two days of the plague—a miracle which is still commemorated in some stained glass in Canterbury Cathedral. Here, again, the story is life-like, and the evidence good. But the boy's nurse and brother also die of the plague, and are not raised. There are distinct hints that the boy was never dead, but only in some kind of trance.[4]

There are several other cases of the resuscitation of people supposed to be dead.[5] In one instance, William becomes eloquent. 'Bethany has seen a four days' corpse revived; England (like other countries) has often seen

[1] Vol. ii. p. 64. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 289, 293. [3] *Ibid.* p. 80 f.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 128 f. [5] Vol. i. pp. 160, 190; vol. ii. pp. 51, 146, 162, 198.

a two days' or three days' case ; but the Lamp of England enlightens the land of Touraine still more brightly.' He goes on to describe the raising of a French boy who had been dead for seven days.[1]

When, side by side with such marvels, we find the simplest accidents or most commonplace coincidences [2] treated in precisely the same way, we begin to understand the temper which gave rise to these miracle-stories. ' Miracles come when they are needed. They come not of fraud, but they come of an impassioned credulity which creates what it is determined to find. Given an enthusiastic desire that God should miraculously manifest Himself, the religious imagination is never at a loss for facts to prove that He has done so ; and in proportion to the magnitude of the interests at stake is the scale of the miraculous interposition.' [3]

At the same time, it would be unscientific to attribute everything to the creative faith of the populace, and nothing to the personality of the martyr who inspired such devotion. Dr. Abbott is right in saying that the miracles of St. Thomas ' make us realise how human nature—always weakly acted on by mere ideas, and always craving for incarnations of those ideas—can receive a great and simultaneous upheaval, extending through many churches and nations, from the noble death of a noble man representing what seems to the masses a noble and unselfish cause. This is one of the many triumphs of mind over matter. Through ballads, sermons, pictures, and, above all, through stories of pilgrims passing to and from the Martyr's Memorial, there was gradually conveyed to the minds of almost all the sick and suffering folk in England, and to their sympathising households and friends, the image of St. Thomas before the altar, clothed in white, with the streak of blood across his face. This vision, or this thought, resulted in a multitude of

[1] Vol. ii. p. 51. [2] Cp. vol. ii. pp. 190, 220.
[3] Froude, 'The Life and Times of Thomas Becket' in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, new edition, vol. iv. p. 179.

mighty works of healing, rescue from agony, restoration to peace and health. What wonder if these sank deep into the minds of the masses? Wherever the church bells were set ringing for a restored cripple, surely it cannot be surprising that in that village St. Thomas should be a patron saint—perhaps the patron, perhaps almost overshadowing Jesus Himself—for at least a generation. The wonder is, not that these marvels influenced men so much, but that they did not influence them much more.'[1]

The early chroniclers delighted to trace or to invent analogies between the martyrdom of St. Thomas and that of his Master. We may well end this study by quoting the words in which Dr. Abbott expresses the real likeness of the two cases.

'Two men, put to death by the powers of this world as disturbers of its peace; two men who, after death, immediately began to appear in visions, with the marks of martyrdom upon them, and to utter words of help or warning, and to work mighty works of healing, sometimes imparting to those who believed in them the power of instantaneously shaking off apparently incurable disease, sometimes imparting the power of curing disease in others, through appeal to the Saviour or the Martyr, sometimes reanimating the apparently lifeless in such circumstances as to suggest a veritable raising from the dead—here in itself is a parallel worth considering. Again, what follows? By degrees, in both cases, the miracles, after the first great outburst, diminish, fade away, come finally to nothing. In the Christian Church there remained for many generations the class of professional exorcists; but very soon they became little more than an empty name—much like English shrines and relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury in the early part of the sixteenth century, sacred by traditions, and with many memorials of former wonder-working efficacy, but themselves efficacious now no longer.

'Side by side with these acts of healing—marvellous,

[1] Vol. ii. p. 305.

indeed, but explicable from known natural causes—we find attributed to both men, and to the Providence that worked for them, acts inexplicable from any such causes . . . and, in the case of both men, we find it possible to explain these stories, when they occur in the earliest narratives, from a confusion of the spiritual with the material, and from a misunderstanding of metaphor as literal.

'It is often said concerning the Gospels, that, if some of them were written as early as thirty or forty years after Christ's death, there is not time enough to allow the growth of the legendary element from the misunderstanding of metaphor. How, it is asked, could the leaven so rapidly pervade the biographies of the Saviour that the legendary now appears almost inseparable from the historical? But here again we find a parallel, and something more. Many of the accounts of the life and death of Becket were written *within five years of his martyrdom.* Many of the miracles—certainly those recorded by their earliest chronicler—were written down *at the very time of their occurrence.* Yet even in these early documents we find that writers, speaking from "veracious relation," record portentous falsehoods, or let us rather say *non-facts*, and that even writers depending upon the evidence of eye-witnesses, and sometimes (though much more rarely) on the witness of their own eyes, fall into astonishing errors, many of which take the direction of such amplification as to convert the wonderful but explicable into the miraculous and inexplicable.'[1]

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 307-308. Cp. Jessop and James, *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich, passim.*

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